

# AN ANALYSIS OF WRITING









**AN ANALYSIS OF  
WRITING**

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# AN ANALYSIS OF WRITING

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# CONTENTS

## PREFACE

|      |                             |     |
|------|-----------------------------|-----|
| I    | WRITING AND THINKING        | 11  |
| II   | A PRACTICE THEME            | 17  |
| III  | LOGICAL METHODS             | 24  |
|      | A. LOGICAL METHODS ISOLATED | 25  |
|      | B. LOGICAL METHODS COMBINED | 50  |
| IV   | THE ELEMENTS OF DISCOURSE   | 60  |
| V    | REPRESENTATIVE TASKS        | 65  |
|      | PICTURES IN WORDS           | 65  |
|      | CHARACTER PORTRAYAL         | 69  |
|      | THE ELEMENTS OF A STORY     | 72  |
|      | WRITING STORIES             | 76  |
|      | EXPLAINING A PROCESS        | 84  |
|      | EXPOUNDING AN IDEA          | 86  |
|      | DEFENDING A BELIEF          | 94  |
|      | The Forms of Inference      | 98  |
|      | The Brief                   | 105 |
|      | The Written Defense         | 110 |
|      | PERSUASION                  | 112 |
|      | METHODS AND TASKS           | 114 |
| VI   | FORCE IN WRITING            | 115 |
| VII  | STYLE                       | 132 |
| VIII | THE MOODS OF WRITING        | 137 |
|      | THE INTELLECTUAL MOOD       | 137 |
|      | THE EMOTIONAL MOODS         | 139 |
|      | APPENDIX                    | 148 |



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## PREFACE

This book is an analysis of writing, an analysis made in the simplest terms the author could find. In most cases he has retained the old rhetorical names, and has defined them as accurately as possible. But some of the familiar words have been given new meanings, and here and there will be found a fresh term. The cause of these departures has been a desire to treat different divisions of the subject-matter as plainly and logically as the facts allow. At the same time the author has tried to make explicit the qualifications so often overlooked in the statement of rhetorical rules and definitions.

The suggested exercises thruout the text may seem too few; but they are intended for use with the assignment plans explained in the appendix, and the two together will keep a class busy. The author has tried them and secured quite satisfactory results; to other teachers they may at least suggest something better.

For kind and valuable criticism received while preparing the book, the author wishes to thank Professors Edward S. Everett and Thomas E. Rankin. But the greatest debt of all he owes to Professor Fred Newton Scott, under whose guidance he has worked some ten years as student and teacher.

University of Michigan



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## CHAPTER I

### WRITING AND THINKING

Learning to write is largely learning to think, for the process of writing is thinking in words. To write is to run thought into symbols commonly accepted and understood; and the symbols must be arranged in patterns known to those for whom the writing is intended. It is the business of grammar to teach us such patterns; rhetoric trains us to employ them with skill and taste.

We sometimes say of speech or writing that it is "uncouth but forceful," as tho its lack of proper form did not matter. But if we take such speech or writing, make it grammatical, and bring it into accordance with the laws of rhetoric, it will not lose in force, but gain. Hence the value of control over the accepted patterns. With other things equal, the writer who has best mastered grammar and rhetoric is most forceful, just as the "scientific" golfer is more successful than the player who is no less well equipped physically but pays little heed to the form of his strokes.

Of course writing may be uncouth yet forceful. But that is partly because, after all, it roughly follows the accepted patterns, and partly because the thinking, the

logic, is right. For unless the thought be right, there can be no real force. It is possible to construct a piece of writing that obeys the laws of grammar and employs tasteful language, yet says nothing in particular because it lacks a logical development of thought. Consider the following:

Whether you think of the future optimistically or with dread, it is apparent that you should not count unhatched chicks. Success is always the result of necessity of some sort, but the wide-awake bird gets the worm. Eight pints of gasoline make a gallon, and the early carburetor takes a rich mixture. Yet, on the whole, philosophy is either common sense or a pastime for the lazy, who are to be excused in a world where everybody wants to be lazy but few have the courage. So it appears that the truth of the matter is hard to discover.

In the preceding example the thought follows no plotted course, and the result is not even good nonsense. It gives one the impression that its author can think only in sentences, that he cannot grasp, order, and express a group of ideas such as go to the making of a paragraph. To do that requires consecutive thinking, in which ideas are linked and welded to form an unbroken chain, or jointed and fastened together into a single complete structure. In order to write well, therefore, it is necessary to think well. Moreover, the practice of writing develops the power to think; it trains the mind for all of its work.

No one would think of refusing to talk simply be-

cause he could not hope to become a great orator. It is equally foolish to say that you will confine yourself to thinking, and leave writing to those who were born for it. Anybody who can think straight can learn to write well, and he will better his thinking in the process of learning. What must he have as equipment? First, the words he hears and reads from day to day—several thousands of them; second, a working knowledge of grammar and punctuation; third, something to say; fourth, pencil and paper; fifth, common sense. Given these, he can soon acquire a reasonable mastery over rhetorical form, and can train himself to set down clearly, simply, forcefully, the ideas his brain provides. He can do this because the patterns of language, the laws of rhetoric, and the formulae of practical logic are derived from the speech, the writing, and the thinking of countless thousands; they are not merely invented by wise men for our guidance or despair, as the case may be. They are race property; any normal person can understand and use them if he will set himself to the task. It is a matter much like learning to walk, or to saw wood, or to run an automobile.

The process of writing may, of course, be more than a merely practical matter. It may be a fine art. But most of us must rest content to be artizans; we cannot aspire to be artists. We cannot devote to writing the consuming interest and the painstaking care that make great writers. But we should all become at least artizans in the use of language, for it under-

lies and supports all those activities which call for an education beyond what can be acquired from common observation and experience. The ability to think consecutively, which is so well cultivated by the practice of writing, makes successful merchants, manufacturers, bankers, doctors, lawyers, as well as other useful citizens. Again, the person who is able to write is able to read as no others can. He alone can really appreciate literature and enjoy the great river of current newspapers, magazines, and books; he alone can accurately determine the meaning of a contract and judge the value of a speech or sermon. The ability to write makes a man rich in the power to live, makes him a potent member of society.

Finally, there is one paramount reason why we should all acquire such mastery over our language as will enable us to write well: without such mastery we cannot readily communicate our thoughts and feelings to others. Communicating with other persons is perhaps our most difficult and most important activity, for otherwise we can make little profit, gain little pleasure. Since language is our chief means of communication, and since the practice of writing trains us in the use of language, it follows that ability to write brings ability to communicate readily, accurately, profitably, pleasurably. As Robert Louis Stevenson says, " . . . the business of life is mainly carried on by means of this difficult art of literature, and according to a man's proficiency in that art shall be the freedom



and the fulness of his intercourse with other men."

In order to learn the art of writing one must write regularly and frequently; and it is the aim of this book to guide the student in such practice. At the same time we must bear in mind that learning to write is closely associated with learning to read, so that practice in reading is perhaps no less important. The careless, slovenly reader can scarcely hope to become a forceful writer, since he lacks the habit of accurate interpretation of the printed page. Failing to gather the full, or perhaps even the correct, meaning of what he reads, he is all the more prone to overlook the fine points that combine to make the difference between good and bad writing. Constant reading is therefore essential, but with close attention to the exact meaning of the matter in hand. Much advantage is derived from reading aloud. The student who will practice reading aloud until he can, by proper inflection and emphasis, make what he reads clearly understandable to others, will most quickly learn to write well. He will soonest learn to express his thoughts in clear, direct, and concise form—which is, or should be, his aim. Consider the use of connectives alone—prepositions, conjunctions, and relatives. They express the relationship of ideas and guide the reader or listener along the course of the writer's thought. In interpreting the printed page they are of extreme importance; yet by writing alone the student will rarely, if ever, master the various and potent connectives that English

offers him. He must read aloud, and thus learn to use instinctively the little words that make sentences meaningful. Any course in writing will be bettered, therefore, if some attention is paid to practice in reading aloud.

## CHAPTER II

### A PRACTICE THEME

It is assumed that the student who uses this book has a fair vocabulary, knows how to spell his stock of words, can construct a grammatical sentence, and can punctuate properly. He will be asked to put sentences together so that they form the larger units—the sentence-group, the paragraph, and the essay. When it is a logical unit of discourse, the paragraph is a group of sentences so related in thought that they express a greater, dominant idea, or rouse a certain feeling, or serve as introductory, transitional, or summarizing material in a longer body of writing. The dominant, or central, idea may or may not be briefly stated in one of the sentences composing the paragraph. When it is so stated, that sentence is known as the *topic sentence* or *topic statement*, and is said to express the paragraph theme. The topic sentence usually occurs either at the beginning or at the end of the paragraph, but it may occur in any part of the paragraph; often it occurs both at the beginning and at the end.

But altho the student will be asked to write paragraphs, and altho he must from the beginning keep in

mind what has just been said about the paragraph, the first task of this book will presently turn out to be an inquiry into the methods of thought employed in writing. The units that result from the employment of these methods, will be our units of study. They may involve a single sentence, or two or more sentences in a paragraph, or a complete paragraph, or even two or three paragraphs.

For the sake of convenience and clarity, we shall use chiefly sentence-group examples of the logical methods at work. Moreover, such examples will be best suited to our purpose because they will demand mental effort sufficient to put us to the stretch, yet not more than can reasonably be expected. Our examples will look like paragraphs, and probably most of them would be paragraphs if they were included within longer writings; but this means only that the paragraph is usually, not always, a logical unit. Frequently it is the result of an arbitrary division, and therefore is not a vital, logical unit, no matter how important it may be as a paragraph. A little study of present-day writing will show that many considerations besides the demands of logic determine the paragraphing, altho' the other considerations must not be contrary to the demands of logic. The logic of a piece of writing—its thought pattern, not its paragraph pattern—is of prime importance.

Let us turn now to a short preliminary essay, in order to discover in general how one who writes might approach his task.

Suppose our teacher of rhetoric has asked us to write under the title, "How College Courses Are Chosen." Having thought the matter over, we perhaps conclude that there is much ill-considered choosing of courses at our college. That idea will serve, then, as our central idea. Most people believe, no doubt, that a student should map out his college work beforehand, because common sense indicates that planned work produces the best results. Let us therefore begin with this belief, and work toward our central idea. All the time let us keep in mind that we are writing for our classmates; they are "the public" for us. We may start off as follows:

A college course, like every other kind of work, should follow some predetermined scheme intended to produce a desired result. . . .

What next? Do we need to support that statement by giving reasons? Not for our "public." Then we can only proceed from it to some related idea that will carry us further into our subject. Perhaps the following comes to mind naturally:

. . . The desired result dictates the plan to be followed; and there are two greater aims with which earnest students enter college. Some come to acquire what is known as general culture; that is, to study history, literature, art, philosophy, science and one or two languages, not merely in order to gain broad knowledge, but mainly in order to train themselves as thinkers and as capable citizens.



Others come to prepare themselves for successful study in a professional school, and at the same time to follow such "purely cultural" courses as they have time for. . . .

Are we moving forward? Certainly we have not gone beyond what must already be well known to our supposed readers. But if what we have said is correct, they have probably followed our thought, knowing that we must lay a foundation for what we have to build. Now it is time to erect the framework that will indicate the shape of our structure. In other words, we must tell plainly just what we think is wrong with the planning of courses; and in order to do so we must examine the reasons that lie behind the choosing of certain courses in preference to others. The search should lead us to something pretty definitely related to our personal experience. This does not mean that everything we find to say must be new to all our readers. They will like it better if some of it tallies with their own experience, and if anything will be more ready to accept our judgment. What, then, do we know about the actual planning or choosing of courses at the time of enrollment in classes? With the answer to this question let us once more take up our writing. Notice in particular the first word of the new sentence, for it is the signpost that guides the reader around the turn of our thought.

. . . But when students come to the matter of choosing courses from the great number that are offered, they lose sight of the greater aim and make decisions for various

petty reasons. Also, most of them do not know just how the studies are related to one another, and therefore cannot make a wise election of courses. It is true that freshmen are closely guided; but sophomores and upperclassmen are left practically to their own devices, and they are the chief offenders and sufferers.

What ought a reader to expect now? Probably he expects us to give some of the petty reasons mentioned, and to cite some of the wrong decisions we have known students to make. Let us give him, then, what we have led him to expect. But when we turn to such material, we start out on a new and more specific line of thought. Such broad statements as we have made so far will no longer serve our purpose. Our next sentences will explain or expand the statement that students elect courses for petty reasons. In short, we have reached the end of our first group of sentences, of paragraph one, and we can now see that it is merely introductory. It leads into the real essay:

Students like a compact schedule. They fancy that it gives them more leisure. So they frequently choose a course simply because it is given at a convenient hour. Students are lazy. They flock to an "easy" course like sheep to green pasture, regardless of whether the course should logically be part of their work. Students are hero-worshippers. They crowd into the classroom of a popular teacher, or of a personality, without asking whether the subject-matter of his course is what they need. These causes, and others like them, result in programs that lead nowhere in particular, because they are not closely cor-

related. In fact, the students do not really get a proper understanding of the courses so pursued, for the true significance of any study is discovered only when that study has been seen in its relationship to other studies.

We seem to have completed another division of our theme, a division made up, first, of three reasons why students make improper choice of courses, second, of two concluding sentences that restate the results of their improper choosing. It is apparent that the second paragraph is finished, for we have made good our statement about petty reasons. In the mind of any alert reader, however, we have only succeeded in raising a question, namely: What is to be done about this careless choosing of courses? Now it is impossible to stop without answering that question as well as we can. If we do not answer it, our essay will clearly be incomplete; if we do attempt an answer, we shall have justified our introductory paragraph and the paragraph telling how students now make wrong decisions in the choice of courses. It is also plain that supplying an answer will bring us to the end of the essay; for stating and solving a problem make a complete process. Notice how the next paragraph is joined to the preceding, how it grows out of it:

Therefore steps should be taken to acquaint students with the university curriculum as a unified whole made up of related parts. Since it is probably impossible to give a study about studies in the high school as part of the preparation for higher education, the university itself

must act. It can begin by including in its general catalog a brief discussion of studies and groups of studies, in which the different courses are related one to another and their particular values are pointed out. It can also provide for freshmen a compulsory course that might be called "A Brief Survey of the Field of Knowledge," a course to be given by representatives of the various departments; or it can provide a textbook that serves the same purpose, and put the course into the hands of one teacher. Finally, it can require each sophomore to present, at the time of his enrollment as a sophomore, a plan of elections for the remainder of his undergraduate work. Naturally, these are only suggestions, not necessarily the right remedies; but measures of a similar nature ought to lessen the haphazard choosing of courses.

This completes our essay. It is included here merely to exemplify the sort of general questions a person must ask and answer as he constructs a piece of writing. Perhaps after this preliminary and not at all searching analysis, we are better prepared for a close study of the process of writing.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write an essay, three or four paragraphs in length, on a subject assigned or approved by the teacher. Write only on the right half of the paper. On the left half tell briefly just why you included the material in each paragraph.

(b) Re-write the essay on "How College Courses Are Chosen," dropping out any material not necessary to expression of the main idea.

## CHAPTER III

### LOGICAL METHODS

Writers have to deal with word ideas, sentence ideas, sentence-group ideas, essay ideas, chapter ideas, and book ideas. Of course the mind, in any moment of productive activity, is fashioning a sentence. When expressing ourselves, either in writing or in speech, we think in sentences. But certainly we are able to look ahead further than the next period; we can produce, and hold in mental focus, thoughts so complex that their expression requires several sentences.

Perhaps the mind of one who undertakes to write a long essay works somewhat as follows. Out of the flux of ideas comes one that arrests the attention. This interesting idea may be one into which many others, previously held, have now fused because of some suggestion. Then all the mind need do, in order to produce the essay, is to hold the central idea and set down successively the other ideas that relate themselves to it, that are responsible for it. Often they will come crowding forward so fast that they cannot all be caught and held. On the other hand, the writer may get the essay idea alone, from some outside source, and he may then proceed to build up his essay by de-

liberately concentrating upon the idea so that whatever related material his mind holds will present itself. In both cases the mind simply draws upon its stock of ideas by discovering those that are alike or opposite, or have previously been thought of together, or by breaking up the essay idea into its parts, tracing out causes and results, searching for reasons, etc. In a third case, that is, when the writer's mind holds little material related to his essay idea, he may resort to books and persons to "stock up" with ideas, allowing his mind to relate and order them.

Such, roughly, are the mental processes of one who produces connected speech or writing. Our next task is to explain and to exemplify the various logical methods that the mind employs in ordering its ideas. We must learn the practical logic of written discourse, find out how writers think. If we can understand their methods of thought, learning to write will become largely a matter of practice. And we *can* understand them, for everybody uses the same methods. The difficulty is that most of us use them naturally, blindly. We cannot check up when we go wrong, nor can we consciously apply the methods to a task of expression; and unless we can do these two things, we can neither think nor write well.

#### A. LOGICAL METHODS ISOLATED

*Definition.*—Frequently, when writing, one has to tell what a word means; that is, one has to use sen-



tences which equal the word in meaning. There may be just one sentence so used, or there may be many; but in either case the definition of the word is built up by addition, or made just right by subtraction. Either the writer says that the word means certain things, or he says that it does not mean certain things, or he says both, until he has equalled the idea content of the word. He works upon the understanding that an idea, like other things, is equal to the sum of its parts.

The following is a paragraph definition of the word "paragraph." It is such a definition as might appear in a textbook on rhetoric, where any sentence definition would probably be unsatisfactory because incomplete.

A paragraph is a unit of writing composed of sentences so related in thought that they express a greater, dominant idea, or rouse a certain feeling, or serve as introductory, transitional or summarizing material in a longer piece of writing. However, a paragraph may be composed of only one sentence; that is, when the idea of a certain sentence is equal in rank to the central ideas of paragraphs used with that sentence, then the sentence may stand alone as a paragraph. So it appears that in a given piece of writing the paragraphs are sentences or groups of sentences which deserve indentation because their idea content is important enough, or their length is great enough, to warrant it. This statement makes room for the cases in which a single idea that ranks with other paragraph ideas is treated in more than one paragraph because it bulks too



large for the eye or for the understanding. It is still necessary to include those cases in which we paragraph because we are writing down what different persons have said in conversation.

A little study will show that each sentence of the foregoing paragraph contributes something toward the idea "paragraph," and that it takes all of the sentences to equal that idea. The writer aims to define, and he must do it in a group of sentences because he cannot invent a satisfactory single-sentence definition. As another example let us take a definition of the expression "central idea," especially since we shall often have occasion to use it.

In rhetoric textbooks the term "idea," "topic idea," or "central idea," is constantly used. The sentence is said to express an idea; the paragraph and the longer writing are said to treat an idea. What does the rhetorician mean? He means that the sentence represents for the mind that somewhat indeterminate thing, one thought about something. He means that the paragraph can be, so to speak, squeezed down into one portable statement, the central idea, which the mind can grasp entirely at one effort. He means that longer writings can likewise be condensed into the primary unit of discourse, the statement about something. "Idea," then, has different applications in rhetoric, but essentially one meaning.

It is frequently desirable to define a word because it is new, or has acquired new uses. In such cases the sentence-group definition is likely to be necessary.

Suppose we take the somewhat slangy term "jazz," and attempt to make its meaning clear:

"Jazz" is primarily applied to music in which sophistication and savagery are about equally mixed. Such music regards the rules of melody and harmony in order that it may break them. It makes use of clever contrapuntal devices and constantly employs syncopation, just as ragtime does. But it adds dissonance, disturbance, to make syncopated, contrapuntal noise in a rigid rhythmic pattern. It whines, it whistles, it slides crazily up and down the scale, out of key. It introduces sudden notes that shock. But all the time it goes beating on steadily like a tomtom in the jungle night. It is music in which man remembers his savage state without forgetting his civilized state. Such is "jazz," wherein the truly natural, the primitive, finds expression long since denied it.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write a paragraph that defines "common sense," or "wisdom," or "pleasure," or "failure," or some new slang term. Do not use a dictionary.

(b) Bring to class for discussion a paragraph or a sentence-group definition found in an essay or in some textbook.

*Explication.*—Closely allied to groups of sentences that define single words, are those that clarify the meaning of a complete statement by repeating parts or all of it in other terms. Sometimes it is necessary to make clear what a statement means because the expected readers will have difficulty in grasping the idea when it is compactly phrased. Then the writer re-

peats the idea in more extended form, in simpler terms, and so may even build up a complete paragraph. At other times it is desirable to subtract from or add to the meaning that might naturally be taken from a given statement, and the process requires several sentences.

Passages of the kind just mentioned may be called explication. They differ from definition only in the fact that the idea to be made clear is presented in the form of a statement, not as a word to be defined. It should be noted, also, that the defining of words may be a part of clarifying a statement. In such cases the definition is subordinate. Finally, explication, like definition, is based on the axiom that an idea is equal to the sum of its parts.

The following is a paragraph of explication:

Intensive study makes for unification of knowledge. In other words, what the mind works over and stores away with little interruption, it stores in an orderly, logical, compact form. Such form gives unity, which is not mere oneness, but oneness through co-ordination. The knowledge stored by close and continuous concentration is felt to be a totality made up of interrelated organic parts; that is, such knowledge is held together, not just because it gets into the mind as a mass, but partly because when storing it rapidly the mind sees better how its parts are related to one another.

When one argues for the truth of a statement, one must be sure that the statement is taken as it is meant. This necessity often gives occasion for passages of ex-

plication. Suppose that one is writing in defense of this proposition: College athletes should be required to maintain a high scholastic standing. One of the introductory paragraphs, or part of it, might read as follows:

When I say that college athletes should be required to maintain a high scholastic standing, I speak only of those athletes who are to represent their school in intercollegiate contests, not of those who take part in interclass games. I mean that these "varsity" men should be required to maintain better than an average grade in their studies, a grade that would mark them as good students, though not necessarily as the best students. I mean, too, that grades should be checked up at the end of each semester, and that to fall below the grade set as the athlete's minimum should automatically disqualify a student, even though he had previously earned his place upon some team.

The examples of definition and of explication used above do not go beyond the idea to be made clear. They do not state the idea and then give an example to clarify it, or make its meaning plain by comparison, or by the use of causes and effects. They merely re-present the idea in equivalent terms, in lesser ideas. Also, they are abstract methods of treatment, and are therefore to be contrasted with certain other methods that will come later.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write a paragraph of explication that treats a statement which you feel needs to be made clear for a certain audience. In the margin of

your theme tell what sort of audience you have in mind.

(b) Discover a passage of explication and bring it to class for analysis.

*Concrete Particulars.*—Such a statement as “The old beech by the river is indeed fantastic,” may be treated in at least three ways. One may make it still clearer which tree is meant, or one may define “fantastic”; but the usual, the natural thing to do, is to show just how, in what particulars, the old beech is fantastic.

The old beech by the river is indeed fantastic. On the river side of the tree its dried and twisted roots hang helpless above the undermining water, and the tree itself leans perilously over the stream, as though looking down at its reflection. What it sees is a mass of gnarled branches writhing about a rough and stunted trunk. But the surrounding leafage, when one is at a little distance, completely hides the hideous body and the tentacle arms, and makes the old beech a leaning tower of green.

In the preceding paragraph the meaning of “fantastic” is taken for granted, but its application to the old beech is set forth in detail. The visible features that make the tree fantastic are presented to the reader; the meaning to be made clear in this case is transmitted in terms that call up visual images, one of the several kinds of sense images, which are all concrete ideas. Hence the name “concrete particulars.” Let us take another example; in this, however, there is an added element.

They went gradually past—horse, buggy, and man. The horse's head hung low, and swung slightly from side to side as each slow foot was lifted, moved deliberately forward, and then allowed to drop into the dust with a soft "spat." The rate of progress was as near to standing still as Old Dobbin—it must have been Dobbin—could make it; and if he was not actually asleep, he must have been dreaming. In the faintly creaking buggy sat a huge man, who seemed to overflow the seat. His hands were crossed upon his stomach, his head lay forward, nodding gently with the buggy's motion, and he slept profoundly, peacefully, miraculously. By the hitching post the horse stopped, and slowly turned his head around to view the driver. The man awoke, stretched, looked about him, and said, "Giddap! Can't you see nothin' but hitchin' posts?" Then they moved on as before.

The paragraph that characterizes the old beech presents a still picture. In the last paragraph there is action, albeit action of a very tame sort. Yet both paragraphs give concrete particulars; they use words that represent sense images—sights and sounds in the second paragraph. So there is no essential difference between the two because the latter relates a happening. Each treats its central idea by reducing it to particulars. In such paragraphs the task of the writer is to separate his still picture, or his moving picture, into its parts, and then to order and express the parts so that his readers can, without confusion, put them together into a complete picture.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Examine the paragraph



that describes the old beech. Note the expressions that give the reader a point of view, or points of view. Pick out sentences, phrases or words that make comparisons, and notice that no one of the comparisons treats the tree as a fantastic whole. Each of them compares some particular to a similar thing; e. g., branches to tentacle arms. Even the "leaning tower" comparison only makes clear one particular of the tree's fantastic appearance. In short, all of the comparisons are partial, subordinate; none covers all of the idea "fantastic beech."

(b) Examine the paragraph that tells of the man who goes by in a buggy. Does it contain a topic statement? If not, what topic statement is implied? Can you discover any causes and effects in the paragraph? If so, are they specifically related to the topic statement as causes of it, or is the link of causation used merely to join two minor happenings? In other words, is the paragraph written to show that the topic statement is the effect of certain causes?

(c) Write two or three paragraphs giving the concrete particulars of some occurrence that you have recently seen.

(d) Bring to class a paragraph of concrete particulars taken from some work of fiction.

*Examples.*—Some topic ideas can most readily be treated by citing one or more familiar examples; that is, by referring the reader to other cases of the same kind, objects of the same class, persons of the same type, etc. The writer proceeds upon the common belief that things are like other things of the same class. Consider this paragraph:



Really, the accident was over before we had time to know anything about it. It was exactly like our running into the telephone pole that day with the automobile, or like our upsetting the canoe last summer, or like what happened when the porch swing came down yesterday. It happened, and then we realized what had happened.

Plainly the examples used in the preceding sentence-group are employed merely to make the reader understand the first sentence and its restatement in the last sentence. They do not go into particulars, but present other accidents which give the meaning "in a lump."

Closely allied to examples that explain, are examples that define. Frequently, in ordinary conversation and in the classroom, we hear some one say, "I can't tell you just what it means, but I can give you an example." And sometimes a writer finds it best to do just that. The resulting logical unit is properly called one of example, rather than one of definition, because the method of equalling the topic idea is not to use lesser ideas whose sum is the topic idea, but to employ complete cases of the idea itself. The method is concrete rather than abstract. Consider the following:

Have you ever had that "gone feeling?" I can't tell you what it is in so many words. But you have surely stepped down an unexpected step in the dark. That's it. Or you have driven thoughtlessly round a blind corner and just missed a speeding car. That's it, too. Or perhaps you have waked up five minutes too late for an im-

portant train, or lost your job without warning. Then you know exactly what I mean.

Very often examples are used, not to define or to explain, but to prove a topic statement. The following will serve to illustrate:

Accidents frequently give one no chance to think about what to do. Do you remember our running into the telephone pole with the automobile? It was all over before we could decide to jump. And the day we upset the canoe? Neither of us knew exactly how it happened, much less thought of avoiding it. It was the same, too, with our fall in the porch swing. We might have held to the chains and softened the fall if there had been time to think about it. But there wasn't time. Really, when there is time to think, there is no accident.

A sentence-group may present just one case in point to clarify or to prove its topic idea, and it may go into the particulars of the case at some length. Nevertheless, such a group should be called one of example, since the particulars are not directly related to the topic idea, but are indirectly related to it thru the example. They are particulars of the example. To illustrate:

In spite of what tennis players say, a round at golf is full of keen excitement. What happened on the sixth hole to-day will prove it—it was a specimen hole. We were a twosome, and the match was a tie. My opponent had the honor, and drove a long, straight ball. It fell far

up towards the huge elm that blocks the fairway at its narrowest part. I felt the tension of strong desire to equal his drive, and addressed the ball with the utmost care. But my muscles shared in the tension, and that is fatal. I topped the ball, and with a sinking heart watched it hop and roll, hop and roll, only half as far as the other ball had gone. My next shot got away well, but straight for the big tree. Then it developed a slight hook and went by into safety, still, however, far short of what the enemy might expect to get.

His ball went whistling up the course, rising, rising too steeply, and cut into the spreading branches, which crippled it and brought it down within a few yards of my own. My heart rose. With perfect confidence I played my mashie shot high, and straight for the pin, only to see it bound sharply to the left and run behind a bunker. The "jinx" was after me. Nor was there any consolation in watching that other ball travel surely to the green and stop within twenty feet of the cup. I played my niblick from the sand. When the dust cleared, there was my ball on the very edge of the green. For a moment I gave up; then, in a little glow of anger, I putted over the smooth slope. The ball rolled in a curve—slowed up—almost stopped, and finally dropped into the hole. Luck had played for me. But I had still to watch with tense anxiety while my opponent got his line and putted for a four. His ball rolled straight towards the hole, then a little off, then straight again, but "trickled" past. The next went down. Two fives! So the match was still a tie. Thus it goes the whole way round, alternate pleasure and pain, and a subtle but constant tension, a fine kind of

fight, that really tests one's courage as well as one's control.

The topic idea in the preceding is a general statement about golf. It is treated by the use of one particularized example given as proof. Notice that the last sentence is practically a repetition of the first, made in order to enforce the point of the example. Notice also that, because of its length, the sentence-group is divided into two paragraphs at a convenient place.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write a paragraph that employs several examples in order to clarify the topic statement.

(b) Write a paragraph that employs examples as proof of the topic statement.

(c) Bring to class a paragraph of example. Come prepared to show how the example or examples are used.

*Comparison.*—When we think of a certain thing and then of an example, the example is a case in point, another thing of the same kind, another member of the same class. When we make a comparison, we bring in something similar from a different class. To put it into other words, an example is the same as the thing exemplified in so many respects that we give them the same class name, while the second object in a comparison is unlike the first in so many respects that we give it a different class name. In fact, the two objects

of a comparison need be similar only in the particular or particulars to be made use of. However, an example of comparison will serve better than words of explanation:

With eyes shaded from the sun, he gazed at a new sight—a flying aëroplane. It was a fabulous hawk on pinions of magic. Higher and higher into the blue sky it circled, with motionless wings outstretched, graceful, lazy, threatening. Suddenly it shot straight away, and then came sweeping back in a long curve, riding the wind. It turned, dipped, rose sharply, and went over backwards in a vertical circle, playing for joy in the strong breeze. It came downward in wide spirals; but presently straightened out, and with effortless speed flew over the horizon, no doubt bound for the home nest.

The purpose of the preceding sentence-group is to picture an aëroplane in flight, and the picture is drawn by asking the reader to recall a flying hawk. The topic statement is implied. It amounts to, "This is how an aëroplane flies," or "An aëroplane flies like a great hawk"; and the whole sentence-group tells how thru the particularized comparison. The group differs from a group of particulars only because the particulars of the aëroplane's flying are all pictured in terms of a flying hawk, that is, because the writer depends upon one governing comparison. He does not treat the aëroplane's flying in terms of a flying plane, as he would in giving mere particulars.

A sentence-group may be made up of a series of

comparisons related definitely to the topic statement, and each treating it as a whole. For example:

In the train-shed the locomotive panted like some pre-historic mammoth out of breath. It gasped, and gulped air—Atlas after a sprint around the earth. It was a runner laboring for his second wind, a great dog at the finish of a fox-chase, a spent horse just out of the race. In fact, its resonant, metallic breathing sounded a good deal as tho the monster had asthma.

A passage such as the foregoing is certainly not one of particulars. It employs a series of comparisons any one of which would serve to characterize that coughing or panting noise which is peculiar to a standing locomotive. The topic statement is implied; "A standing locomotive sometimes makes a noise like that of panting or coughing."

The topic statement for each of the last two examples has expressed the comparison. That, however, is not always the case in passages of comparison. Examine this paragraph:

Constructing good written discourse is a practical matter. Have you ever watched a cabinet-maker at his work? He has in mind the idea of a table that he must make, one idea that he wishes to express in wood, screws, glue and varnish. From all his stock, his vocabulary, of wood, he chooses those pieces that most nearly express the idea parts of his table. These pieces he modifies, shapes to exactness, and then fastens together with his connectives, glue and screws, and by jointing, so that they make a



pattern which others will recognize as a table. It is all practical business, the business of symbolizing an idea in materials no more real than the sounds or the visible appearances that we weave into a pattern of words.

The purpose of the preceding paragraph is to show the practical nature of a writer's task. This purpose is fulfilled by comparing writing with cabinet-making in a way that brings out their similarity in being practical. When the reader is thinking of the nature of writing, he is reminded of the nature of cabinet-making in terms applicable to both. Thus the paragraph makes clear by comparison what its topic statement means, altho the topic statement does not express a comparison.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write a paragraph that employs a single comparison to clarify a statement which does not express a comparison.

(b) Write a paragraph that employs three or more comparisons to make clear a single characteristic of some person or thing. Include the topic statement in the paragraph, and underscore it.

(c) Write a paragraph that makes a negative comparison, that is, contrasts two things to make clear a topic statement about one of them.

(d) Bring to class a passage of poetry that is a sentence group of comparison.

*Cause and Effect.* In the paragraph that detailed the passing of "old Dobbin," certain cause and effect relationships were to be found. Each cause, however,



was explicitly related only to a minor effect, not directly to the topic fact. In a different sort of sentence-group, the topic sentence includes a topic fact of which the other sentences give one or more causes. The cause and effect relationship between the topic fact and the rest of the facts is made plainly evident; and the topic statement is not a mere summary of a series of happenings. It states a fact brought about by other facts. Following is an example of this kind, the cause and effect sentence-group:

It is good mental training to think frequently with pencil and paper, especially upon a new subject. When one has a pencil in his hand and white paper to fill, he concentrates most easily upon his task and his mind readily acquires power to drive forward, forms a good habit. Moreover, in attacking a new subject one must search within the mind for pertinent facts, must exercise the associative faculties. And a new subject calls for original analysis, for the discovery or the invention of a pattern that fits the subject because it grows out of the subject. This stretches the constructive faculties. Finally, the fact that one is setting down on paper the results of his thinking, makes one try to be accurate in statement, which in turn improves the thinking.

The logical pattern of this example brings out the thought relationship clearly. Note the subordinate causes. Note also that the order of the ideas is different from the order followed in the paragraph itself.

(Topic statement: effect) It is good mental training to think frequently with pencil and paper, especially upon a new subject.

(Cause) The mind acquires power to drive forward  
—forms a good habit

(Cause) Easily learns to concentrate.

(Causes) Pencil in hand.

Paper to fill.

(Cause) Exercises associative faculties.

(Cause) Must search for pertinent facts.

(Cause) Stretches the constructive faculties.

(Cause) Necessary to make original analysis.

(Cause) Improves thinking.

(Cause) Makes one try to be accurate.

As the pattern of this paragraph shows, the lines of causation run from the various activities the mind must perform, from the contributing factors, to the result, "good mental training." Thus the topic statement itself contains all the material used; it amounts to: To think frequently with pencil and paper, especially upon a new subject, *results* in good mental training. This statement is treated by breaking the process of *thinking frequently with pencil and paper upon a new subject* into its parts, and then showing that each contributes toward *good mental training*.

The following example presents a somewhat different pattern:

When he drove next he made just one slight change in form. Instead of addressing the ball with the club at a right angle to the line of flight, he moved his hands a trifle

to the left, thus putting the club head behind the shaft and his hands. The first effect was to make him feel the necessity of snapping the club head through at the bottom of the swing. Also, when he carried the club away in the backward swing, his hands easily maintained the same advanced position, and therefore came forward and down in advance of the club head, making it both necessary and possible to strike the ball finally with a quick blow from the wrists. This greatly increased the speed of the club, and carried it well through after the ball. In short, the result of all these contributing factors was a long, clean drive.

The topic statement is at the end of the preceding paragraph. It gives the effect of several causes, which are themselves effects ascribed to one initial cause, "he moved his hands a trifle to the left." The difference between this paragraph and the one that narrates the passing of "old Dobbin" is that all the details of this paragraph are treated as bringing about the single result stated in the topic sentence, while the details of the other paragraph are parts of a line of action that is *summed up* in the topic statement. In this latter paragraph the writer's attention is fixed upon the causal relationship, not upon events for their own sake. It would be possible, of course, to include the paragraph about "Dobbin" among paragraphs of cause and effect; but in the light of what has just been said, it seems best not to do so. This decision is strengthened by the fact that many passages of cause and effect do not employ events. The following is a case in point:

College students, contrary to their own belief, are extremely conservative. In school and at home they have been taught conformity, and they are just at the age when the lesson takes hold. Likewise, their school books have given them only well-established facts and doctrines, which they adopt because they are not yet wise enough to ferret out new facts and form new theories. Moreover, they have the respect of youth for success, and success is merely noteworthy accomplishment in approved activities; it is bolstered up by conservatism. Finally, in the matter of clothes college students are even intolerant, so strong is the conservatism bred in them by the desire to be in the mode.

The causes in the preceding example are not a series of happenings, but matters of training, of belief, of desire. This sort of cause is frequently found in passages of cause and effect in written discourse. Such causes are simply facts the existence of which brings about another and a dominant fact, the topic fact, but in no way makes a story.

In the cause and effect groups so far used as examples, no effort has been made to show that the causes are proof of the topic fact. Yet it is easy to see that the passage about the conservatism of college students might be regarded as an attempt to prove that students are conservative, rather than to show what the topic statement means. In other words, one who questioned the topic fact might feel that the causes were presented as reasons why he should be-

lieve it. Further on we shall have examples in which causes are clearly used as proof.

*Suggested exercises:* (a) Write and bring to class a paragraph in which you set forth the causes of some fact that concerns current magazines or daily newspapers, or the causes of some fact that concerns yourself, your acquaintances, or school life in general. Be sure to include the topic statement in the paragraph. Take the topic fact for granted, and use the causes merely to show how it came about, to explain it.

(b) Find in some essay a sentence group of which the topic statement is developed by stating causes. Come to class prepared to prove that the group is one of cause and effect. If, in presenting a certain cause, the writer uses definition or example or comparison, that will not matter, since these will be subordinate to the cause.

*Reasons.*—Before we can treat sentence-group units that present a reason or reasons to clarify or to prove a topic statement, we must learn the difference between causes and reasons. A cause is a fact thought of as bringing about another fact. When a cause is merely a cause, both it and its effect are taken for granted. But sometimes we say that since a certain fact is known, another may be inferred from it because the first will bring about the second. Plainly the first fact is a cause; but it is also a reason. A reason, then, is a statement from which we may infer a further statement. It need not be a cause, but may be an effect

from which we infer a cause, or a sign of what we infer, or a general statement that includes the inferred statement, or a mere statement of statistical facts.

Reasons are not always offered or accepted as statements intended to prove something, to make us believe something; they are frequently used simply to explain. In such cases the writer expects us not to question his inference, but merely to recognize the sign relationship, or the fact that the general principle includes the particular statement, or the numerical relationship asserted by his statistics. When causes or effects are so used, however, we allow them to fasten the name "cause and effect" upon the units in which they occur, because only the causal relationship is necessary to the explanation. But when causes or effects are used as proof they are called reasons, because their value as causes or effects is less than their value as proof. The important thing is that we may infer from them, that they are used to create belief. The other sorts of reasons are usually called reasons even when they are used merely to explain.

The chief use of reasons is to create belief. Reasons reach into the unexplored past and the unknown future; they leap from what we actually know to what we can only surmise; they do pioneer work in our search for knowledge. It might even be better to call them by another name when they merely explain, merely repeat what was once real reasoning, real cre-



ative activity, a kind of sublimated guessing. At any rate we shall devote most attention to reasons that attempt to prove something. Consider the following paragraph:

College athletes should be required to maintain a high scholastic standing. Such a policy would make athletes really representative of their schools, not merely representative of professional-amateur athletic associations attached to schools. A representative college man must be a student first. The proposed policy would also enhance the honor of being a "varsity" man; and there would be *two* good reasons for respecting him, not just one. It would also raise the standard of athletic accomplishment; for whatever might be lost of brawn (it would be little) would be more than made up by the added brains. Try-outs would respond more quickly to training, and players would use their wits to more purpose in actual contest. Finally, the high scholastic requirement would raise the scholarship of students. It would provide a powerful incentive to study; for students would more than ever covet places on the various teams. Thus not only athletic standards, but also scholastic standards, would be raised.

If the student will put the ideas of the preceding paragraph into a logical pattern, he will discover that both main and subordinate reasons are used. It will also be profitable for him to determine whether the reasons are causes or effects of the topic fact.

Quite commonly, when we wish to prove or clarify a



statement, we employ some general statement, some principle, under which the topic statement falls. In such cases the principle is a reason. In fact, whenever we give a reason there is a general statement involved, altho it is more often than not merely a silent partner of the reason expressed. Consider, for example, the statement, "College athletes should be required to maintain a high scholastic standing, for such a policy would raise athletic standards." The general statement involved here is, "Any requirement that will raise the standard of athletics, should be demanded of college athletes." Of course the reader, or listener, himself supplies the general statement in such cases. But there are cases in which the writer uses it explicitly, in which it is the factor that must be given to the reader. Let us examine such a case:

(1) Skill in writing requires a good stock of carefully chosen ideas. (2) In order to be skillful in any craft, one must possess a great number of suitable ideas. (3) He must know his tools and their uses; he must know his materials and their possibilities; and he must have ideas to express by applying his technical knowledge. (4) Writing is no exception to the rule; the successful author must have a good supply of ideas.

Sentence (1) of the preceding example is the topic statement, a statement about writing. Sentence (2) is a general statement about crafts, and includes the topic statement. The statements in sentence (3) merely particularize the principle, show what it means by

"suitable ideas." This explanation of the principle is subordinate, and does not determine the type of the sentence-group. Sentence (4) definitely places writing among the crafts, and then repeats the topic statement. Thus the topic statement is treated by the use of a principle, one inclusive reason.

It is possible to accept the last sentence-group as one that aims simply to explain by citing a principle presumably known to expected readers, and by making it clear that the principle includes the topic statement. But whether the principle be taken as proving or as explaining the topic statement, it is still a reason; its relationship to the topic statement remains logically the same. The difference lies within the mind. If the mind questions the topic statement and asks whether the principle includes it, then the principle is a reason presented as proof; if the mind seeks only to understand the topic statement and accepts the principle as an explanation of it, then the principle is used to clarify. In the latter case the sentence group might be classed as one of explication; but it is better to include it with other units that present reasons, because it has the same logical pattern.

*Suggested Exercise:* (a) Determine whether, for you, the following paragraph uses reasons as proof or as explanation. Determine also the kind of each reason.

The common alarm-clock is really a thing of beauty. Any mechanical contrivance that man makes is sure to be somehow adorned, if only by smoothness, brightness, or grace of contour; and the alarm-clock is a mechanical

contrivance. There is beauty in perfection; the perfect symbol of perfection is the circle; and the alarm-clock is circular. Besides, anything that man uses continually, or adopts as a companion, gradually wins a place in his esteem and thus comes to be invested with the beauty always ascribed to familiar and esteemed things. Certainly the faithful alarm-clock belongs within this class. Finally, the alarm-clock has an open, frank, ingenuous countenance; and innocence is always beautiful.

(b) Write a paragraph of reasons intended to prove the topic statement. Before each reason name, in parenthesis, the kind of the reason, i. e., cause, effect, sign, principle. Try to use two or more kinds.

(c) Bring to class an advertisement that employs reasons. Come prepared to name the kind of each reason.

## B. LOGICAL METHODS COMBINED

So far little has been said about the joint and the subordinate uses of logical methods. Yet in any piece of writing that runs beyond a few sentences, joint use or subordination will probably be found. In a given paragraph one sentence may make a comparison that relates directly to the topic statement, while the rest of the sentences form a group of causes linked to the topic fact. Again, there may be several sentences devoted to explication of the topic statement, and still another group that presents reasons for believing it. Each of these cases would be a case of joint use. In diagram form they might be represented as follows:

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| (Topic Statement) | ..... |
| (Comparison)      | ..... |
| (Causes) 1        | ..... |
| 2                 | ..... |
| 3                 | ..... |
| (Topic Statement) | ..... |
| (Explication) 1   | ..... |
| 2                 | ..... |
| 3                 | ..... |
| (Reasons) 1       | ..... |
| 2                 | ..... |

In cases of subordination within a sentence-group, the subordinate methods are used as auxiliary to the methods that relate directly to the topic statement. First the group may present a reason for believing the topic statement; then may follow several causal reasons to establish the fact asserted in the statement of the first reason. The cause group is subordinate to the first reason. In the same sentence-group there may follow a comparison related to the topic statement, and the comparison may be particularized. The resulting diagram would be the following:

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| (Topic Statement)                      | ..... |
| (Reason)                               | ..... |
| (Causes) 1                             | ..... |
| 2                                      | ..... |
| (Comparison: sentences of particulars) |       |
| 1                                      | ..... |
| 2                                      | ..... |

The following paragraph will serve to illustrate both joint and subordinate use of logical methods:

(Topic Question) Is it worth while to study the literature of past ages, much of which naturally lacks interest for us? (Example) Suppose that we allowed Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Cæsar, Plutarch, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Richardson, Dickens, Thackeray, to gather dust upon the shelves. (Comparison that presents a reason) Literature is a stream that flows down the course of time. Any cross section, the literature of any age, is made up largely of ideas that flowed into the stream nearer its source, as well as those from springs within the age itself. Therefore, he who studies contemporary writings gets largely what has been brought into the present by those who have studied the past. Yet altho contemporary literature is mostly of the past, there is still much water upstream that is caught in eddies and exerts no forward pressure. It must be let into the current to swell the ever-widening stream, and the only way to let it in is to open the archives of literature.

This will illustrate how the logical methods are combined within sentence-groups that are roughly identical with the paragraph. The same methods make up the thought patterns of longer writings, so that a given essay may be an intricate combination of logical units of various ranks. Certain subordinate ideas attach themselves to the main idea in the writer's mind, as reasons to prove the main idea, as illustrations of its meaning, as causes, etc. He takes up each subordinate

idea in turn, explains it, exemplifies it, gives its particulars, or employs one of the other methods in treating it. Perhaps he finds it necessary to go even further down the ladder of subordination, possibly two or three rungs more. But he still employs the same methods, until he reaches the single statement rank in the sentence or the clause. In fact it is possible, tho impractical just here, to treat single words as employing the logical methods. For example, "babbling," in "the babbling brook," makes a comparison; "Indian," in "an Indian snake-dancer," pictures a certain kind of snake-dancer, and therefore gives concrete particulars; both "ran" and "rapidly" particularize in "The boy ran rapidly down the street." "Boy" and "street" in the same sentence, because they name things, really point out examples from the classes to which those things belong.

It appears that one who writes is constantly employing the thought methods with which we have been dealing. Analysis of any piece of discourse will show them everywhere present. The student should take each opportunity to make such analysis of what he reads or writes. After the process becomes automatic, he will find that he can read more rapidly and with a better grasp of the sense; also, he will write more readily and to better purpose. Perhaps it will be helpful to illustrate such a combination of methods as might be found in a simply written essay, a piece of argumentation. For this purpose we may expand two paragraphs



already used as examples, since something may be gained from a comparison of the short and the more extended forms.

### THE ATHLETE'S GRADE

A university is first of all a school. It should not disregard other interests, but it must emphasize scholastic endeavor. Faculty, administrative officers, and students should permit no other purpose to take precedence over the scholastic purpose, which is to give the world what can be contributed by healthy men of the best education. Health for these men means, not brawn to cope with heavy muscular tasks, but such a bodily development as will enable them to do the very best constructive thinking.

On some such grounds as the foregoing I believe that university athletes should be required to maintain a high scholastic standing. When I say this I speak only of the men who are to represent their schools in intercollegiate contests, not of those who take part in interclass games. I mean that these "varsity" men should be required to maintain better than an average grade in their studies, a grade that would mark them as good students, tho not necessarily as the best students. I mean, too, that grades should be checked up at the end of each semester, and that to fall below the grade set as the athlete's minimum should automatically disqualify a student, even tho he had previously earned his place upon some team.

All this may sound like the death-knell of intercollegiate athletics; yet I believe it is not that, and shall try to prove as much.

First among the benefits of the proposed high scholastic requirement for athletes is that it would make athletes

truly representative of their schools. At present, especially in baseball and football, they represent what the coaches can do with so many muscular men who are willing to put athletics above scholarship; they represent the athletic organization within the school. They are really amateur professionals, or professional amateurs, sometimes actually professionals, and as such they are animated by the sport-world spirit, which runs strong in the student body. The proposed requirement would set up the ideal representative as a man of scholarly standing plus athletic ability; he would be schoolman as well as sportsman, a person whom the student body could truly honor as the best it could produce.

The second benefit of a high scholastic standard for athletes is that it would produce better athletes. In any university student body there are enough men of the required calibre to make up the varsity teams. These men would respond to the demand for their type if that demand were made explicit by the new requirement. Nor would their coming entail a sacrifice of brawn; rather it would enlist better brains in the business of athletics. Then try-outs and teammen would react more quickly, more intelligently and more effectively to coaching, and more "head-work" would be displayed in actual contests. The result would certainly be keener games.

Just as athletics would be improved, so too would scholarship. Desire to play upon varsity teams, especially upon the truly representative teams, would be a powerful spur to study. Men of athletic ability would buckle down to their books and do some real work. They would be forced to systematize their activities, to drop some of the less useful ones, and thus to cultivate proper

habits of work. They would find in themselves abilities unsuspected before, and they would do better work with relatively less effort. Men who hoped to develop athletic ability would also be spurred to study by that hope; and there would be a tendency for those without hope to improve their work in order not to be outdone in class by men who were athletes as well as good students. Thus scholastic competition would be generally sharpened.

It seems, then, that college athletes should be required to maintain a high scholastic standing. Such a policy would make athletes really representative of their schools, not merely representative of amateur-professional athletic associations attached to schools; for a representative college man must be a student first. The proposed policy would also enhance the honor of being a "varsity" man; since there would be two good reasons for respecting him, not just one. It would likewise raise the standard of athletic accomplishment; for whatever might be lost of brawn (probably nothing would) would be more than made up by the added brains. Try-outs would respond more quickly to training, and players would use their wits to more purpose in actual contest. Finally, the high requirement would raise the scholarship of students. It would provide a powerful incentive to study; for students would more than ever covet places on the various teams, and those who had no chance would not like to be outdone in the classroom by athletes.

The foregoing essay has a very simple pattern. For the most part it merely presents reasons, main and subordinate. Some of the reasons, however, are also causes, and there is likewise the necessary definition

and explication. If it were intended for readers unfamiliar with school life, the essay would doubtless contain clarifying comparisons, examples used to clarify or to prove, and perhaps sentence-groups stating particulars of the examples used.

The following paragraph from Spencer's "Philosophy of Style" will further exemplify how logical methods are combined:

"On seeking for some clue to the law underlying these current maxims, we may see shadowed forth in many of them, the importance of economizing the reader's or hearer's attention. To so present ideas that they may be apprehended with the least possible mental effort, is the desideratum towards which most of the rules above quoted point. [Examples] When we condemn writing that is wordy, or confused, or intricate—when we praise this style as easy, and blame that as fatiguing, we consciously or unconsciously assume this desideratum as our standard of judgment. [Comparison] Regarding language as an apparatus of symbols for the conveyance of thought, we may say that, as in a mechanical apparatus, the more simple and the better arranged its parts, the greater will be the effect produced. In either case, whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result. [Reasons] A reader or listener has at each moment but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognize and interpret the symbols presented to him, requires part of this power; to arrange and combine the images suggested requires a further part; and only that part which remains can be used for realizing the thought conveyed. Hence, the more time and attention it takes to

receive and understand each sentence, the less time and attention can be given to the contained idea; and the less vividly will that idea be conceived."

The three examples given will perhaps serve to show how logical methods are combined. At least they furnish a preparation for the analysis which students should now practice.

It remains to be said that in almost all writing there are sentences which are really outside of the sentence-group units—introductory, transitional, and summarizing sentences. In fact, there may be several sentences which, taken together, introduce or join or summarize, yet do not constitute a sentence-group employing one of the logical methods. In his analysis the student must be on the alert for such sentences, altho he will recognize them without great difficulty. Furthermore, in order to make a complete analysis, the student must observe that the topic ideas of successive sentence-groups, as well as the ideas of successive sentences, are related to one another in various ways, such as by similarity or by contrast, because of proximity in time or place, or because they make up a series of causes and effects. Therefore, if one wishes to reach complete understanding of a piece of writing thru analysis, one must discover the relationships that exist among sentence-group ideas, as well as the logical patterns of the separate groups. One conclusion of this chapter may well be, then, that written discourse is often extremely complex in structure. Sometimes it almost defies

analysis, because of the manner in which the writer mingles his materials. The student may easily and profitably test these statements by analyzing the contents of a collection of essays.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write an essay of several paragraphs on some assigned or approved subject; then analyze it to discover the logical methods used, taking single sentences into account only when they have the same rank as sentence-groups with which they are used.

(b) Analyze a newspaper or magazine editorial that runs at least half a column, and bring it to class for discussion.

(c) Analyze the essay entitled "The Athlete's Grade."



## CHAPTER IV

### THE ELEMENTS OF DISCOURSE

Written discourse is commonly divided into description, narration, exposition, and argumentation; and sometimes persuasion is added to the list. These categories have proved most helpful in the study of writing, yet it is hard to make the facts fit into them. One who analyzes literary writings will find that most, if not all, of them are mixtures of two or more of the so-called "forms of discourse," and that frequently it is impossible to determine which form prevails and so might fix its name upon the writing. Sometimes, too, writing that is description or narration in form from start to finish, is in purpose and effect either expository or argumentative; and always a piece of description or narration expresses some abstract meaning, whether or not the author intends it to do so. Moreover, the purpose of the writer is an unsatisfactory basis of classification, because frequently readers accept a work as exposition when the writer intends it as argumentation, or vice versa. Any satisfactory basis should place a given piece of writing unmistakably for both writer and reader. Really, the familiar categories are not categories in any logical sense. It

will perhaps be better to speak of elements of discourse, rather than of kinds.

First of all, there is the element that represents ideas of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell—in short, represents the primary facts of experience. It may be called the element of *sensation*. In a way this element is fundamental, because sense ideas lie at the foundation of all thought; and it may be said to be present, at least implicitly, in all writing. In some writing, however, it is the main consideration. The mental activity asked of the reader consists largely of the recalling and the ordering or placing of sense ideas; he is asked to remember things that he has seen and sounds that he has heard, and to employ them as the writer directs.

The objects represented by sense images may be either static or in motion, unchanging or changing. In the first case, the writer asks us merely to recognize and place the images that his words stand for. In the second case, he asks us to do something more, i. e., to conceive of his object as changing in nature or position because of the operation of some force. Instead of giving us a snapshot, he gives us a series of snapshots connected in cause and effect and in time relationships; and in addition to recalling images, we must follow the action. This brings into writing another kind of mental activity and a new element, the element that represents change, the element of *causation*. Obviously both of these first two elements are found in a story; but they would likewise be found in

word pictures, or moving pictures, of Vesuvius in action, altho such pictures would not make a story in any real sense.

Writing may demand, further, that the reader shall recognize ideas *about* things, as well as ideas *of* things. Ideas about things are not those that the senses present directly, but those that are made up in the mind. As an example take, "This rose is beautiful," which is formed by classifying "this rose" with other things called beautiful, after the sense ideas caused by the rose have been recognized. If you ask the writer of this sentence what "beautiful" means in sense terms, what *any* beautiful object looks like, he will be unable to tell you; for he has only an abstract idea "beautiful." This idea he has built up from all the beautiful things he has seen; it has no concrete form in his mind, no existence elsewhere. If he tells you what it means, his statement will be made up of other abstract ideas—unless he uses example or comparison, in which cases he dodges the difficulty by making you abstract the meaning for yourself.

The mental activity that produces or understands abstract ideas presented in writing, gives us the third element to be found in discourse. It is essentially a matter of putting things into classes, giving them qualities, as the rose was placed among beautiful objects. Take for example: "Philosophy is the science of sciences." Obviously this third element, the element of *abstraction*, permeates nearly all writing. It is uppermost in such writing as would be called "exposition"; it is the

warp of every "argument"; it is the accompaniment of all "description" and "narration."

There is another element to be recognized—the element that asks the mind to infer, to make a sort of leap in the dark from a given statement of fact to another statement. The second statement may be accepted as fact or as something to be believed; as long as the logical pattern is one of *inference*, the fourth element is present. In other words, one distinction frequently drawn between "exposition" and "argumentation" is somewhat superficial, for the logical patterns of inference are found thruout both, as well as in writings that would invariably be classed as "description" or "narration." The skilful writer of word-pictures or of stories constantly asks his readers to infer sense ideas, causal relationships, and abstract ideas. Some of these ideas he does not phrase; others he states just as one who argues states his conclusions.

To sum up, written discourse is pretty much one piece of cloth, woven unevenly of at least four colors. Now one color dominates the pattern, now another; but all four are perhaps always present, if not always showing on the right side of the cloth. Roughly the four elements say the following: (1) This thing is represented by these sense ideas; (2) This thing does this; (3) This thing is of this sort, has this quality; (4) This thing signifies this further thing.

After what has just been said we may proceed without the forms of discourse, and take up certain tasks just as writers take them up, such tasks as picturing

a scene or an object or a person, portraying a character, telling a story, explaining a process, expounding an idea, defending a statement, or persuading others to act in a certain way. The business of writing is made up of such tasks as these, endlessly repeated and often inextricably woven together. In the course of writing a novel, for example, all of those mentioned might appear, or a long essay might contain them. Of course the novel itself would be a case of telling a story, and the essay a case of expounding an idea.

## CHAPTER V

### REPRESENTATIVE TASKS

#### *Pictures in Words.*

Across the room hangs the picture of a boy lying upon the very top of a grassy hill. His face is toward the sky, but his left arm is bent upwards and over his eyes. His right arm is stretched out from his body, limp upon the grass; and his left knee is lifted, supported by the heel, so that it stands out against the blue sky in the background. His face is not plainly visible, but one cannot overlook the red cravat that flames against his white shirt. His sleeves are rolled to the elbows, and below blue knickerbockers his legs are bare and brown.

In attempting to reproduce the picture just described, it seemed best to begin with the general ideas, the main outlines—"a boy lying upon the very top of a grassy hill"; then to take up more closely the position of the boy; and finally to include the lesser details, such as those of dress. This order permits the reader to build up the picture gradually, and gives him little chance to supply wrong essentials; whereas if the writer began with the lesser details, the reader might more easily run ahead of him and then be forced to



make the picture over almost entirely. From this we may extract the statement that in painting word-pictures a writer's first thought must be: How can I order the parts of my picture so that my readers will build it up naturally and rightly? The answer to this question depends always upon the thing to be pictured, but it may be said that the writer should usually proceed by first sketching main outlines and then putting in details.

Study of the subject to be pictured will usually reveal, moreover, a natural order for taking up the parts of it. It may be prominence that determines this order; it may be natural structure, or functional relationship, or mere proximity—or it may be one of these for greater parts and another for lesser. Frequently it is possible to employ two or more orders with equal success. For instance, in describing a chair one might begin at the top or at the bottom or at the seat; and in describing a landscape one might find several orders possible. It must not be forgotten, however, that in nearly all cases the picture must first be presented as a whole, tho seen dimly, and even if this be done only by naming the subject.

Because of the details omitted, word-pictures are strikingly different from paintings or photographs. The writer cannot reproduce completely, and therefore it behooves him to choose carefully the features that he does include. In this matter he is governed by the use to which his picture is put. In the course of a novel, for example, there will be need for pictures that

approach scientific description in completeness, for favorable and unfavorable pictures, for pictures of threatening or of peaceful landscapes, for portraits of persons in anger, sorrow, joy, chagrin—in short, for pictures turned to many uses. In each case the use will determine, first, how fully the picture shall be reproduced, and then, what details shall be included. A description of a threatening landscape will overlook many items that do not show the threat. Such items will be included only when they are necessary to the mere representation, or when they bring out the threat by contrast.

Somehow the writer of a word-picture must give his reader a point of view, or successive points of view—must keep him constantly informed of his relationship to the thing pictured. The point of view may shift as often as is necessary, but each shift must be made clear. Moreover, the reader should be oriented naturally and simply, without being made consciously aware of it. This is a task that affords a writer opportunity to exercise all of his ingenuity. Just how it can always be done, no one can tell him; but in some way he must do it. Sometimes a single word will establish or alter the point of view, perhaps by implication; at other times a sentence may be necessary; and quite frequently an interpolated phrase or clause will be employed. It matters little how the trick is turned, but one must be sure to turn it.

Just as the painter must choose exactly the right shade, so must the word-painter choose exactly the

right word. It is of the utmost importance that he have a large vocabulary and be master of his synonyms. It will do him little good to observe sharply and to remember clearly what he observes, unless he can find words that will make his picture distinct and vivid for others—words that will, in combination, fit only the object pictured. He will find it necessary to stock up especially on nouns, adjectives, and adverbs; and if he is wise he will give them mostly the values they have in current speech. Now and then, of course he will warp a word to a new meaning, but only when the context makes the new meaning clear. It is largely thru a skilful combining of common words that the best word-pictures are written, not thru a piling-up of unusual terms. In fact, piling up unusual terms is futile, because even if they are understood they call attention to themselves as bombastic. The writer who possesses himself of the descriptive words that may be called current, will find that he has a vocabulary of great range and power.

If word-pictures are to be forceful, the writer must be alert for all the different sense appeals made by the things pictured. Word painting is most frequently a matter of sight, but sounds, odors, tastes, and such qualities as roughness, solidity and weight, are often highly significant and telling details. How much less beautiful a garden of flowers would be without its perfumes. Yet we perhaps marvel more at the beauty of certain flowers after we have been shocked by their

disappointing odors. The writer cannot afford to overlook such facts.

One of the most effective methods of picturing is by comparison. Sometimes, in fact, the general outlines of an object can be given immediately by comparison; e. g., "Far below us on the plain lay the town, like a huge Maltese cross centered where river and railroad intersected"; or, "At the very edge of the lake stood a young fir, a perfect cone of green." After the writer has thus given the fundamental image, all he need do is to fill in details. He has simplified his task thru comparison.

Mention of comparison leads to consideration of the logical methods used in writing word-pictures. They are primarily *giving concrete particulars* and *making comparisons*. Other methods are used in conjunction with them, but these two dominate in such writing.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Describe in non-technical terms all of the exterior of some irregular building, omitting lesser details. Be careful to keep your reader informed as to where he is.

(b) Write a portrait sketch of some local "character."

(c) Employ a fundamental image in a paragraph word-picture.

### *Character Portrayal.*

Obviously there are three main methods of portraying character: to tell what the person does; to tell

what he thinks or believes; and to name his characteristics. When either of the first two is employed, the reader himself must build up the character by connecting the actions or the beliefs with certain traits; he must infer the characteristics. When these are given to him by name or in adjectives applied to the personage portrayed, he may merely accept the character as it is presented. More often than not these methods are used in combination, for they work well together. It is quite natural and effective to say that a personage is generous, and then to exemplify his generosity in some act or belief.

Such are the methods used in portraying character. It is hardly necessary to do more than name them, for any writer will employ them naturally. Yet it may be worth while to note that the two indirect methods, that which sets forth the character's thoughts, and that which allows him to act or speak, are usually more forceful than the cataloging of characteristics. These indirect methods are largely the methods of the storyteller. In fact, he cannot tell his story without employing them, since making persons think and speak and act is part of the telling. Yet the story-teller sometimes gives his personage a ready-made character by saying in so many words that he or she has certain traits; and it is passages in which this is done that we are most likely to call character portrayal. The name, however, should be given to all passages in which the writer's chief aim is to show what sort of personage he has created; and often in narrative we find passages

of action, conversation, or soliloquy used to characterize rather than to narrate.

The writer of a character portrayal must attempt to make his personage not merely a certain type of person but also an individual, a unique combination of traits. He will scarcely succeed in doing this, but he should try; for only in that way can he create characters that seem real. He must also select and emphasize the dominant trait or traits of his personage and relate other traits to them, in order to give to his portrayal the unity that the character possesses. In character portrayals, as in other kinds of writing, unity is to be secured first by discovering the essential oneness of the subject-matter and then by making it the central idea of the writing. A character may be primarily selfish or generous, fearful or courageous, reserved or out-spoken, frivolous or solemn; and whatever trait dominates the character, should dominate the portrayal. On the other hand, a character may possess contrasting or opposing traits, such as cowardice and love of country, money-lust and sympathy for persons in distress. Then the portrayal focusses upon the struggle between the opposing traits, and presents a sort of compromise character. Of course there are opposing minor traits in every character, but what has just been said applies to characters in which two strong traits strive to dominate, and thus make their contrast essential to an understanding of the character. The portrayal of such a character has unity because the contrast it represents is fundamental in the character.



*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write a character portrayal to fit the ideal athlete, the ideal lawyer, the ideal doctor, preacher, teacher, cowboy, etc.

(b) From your own acquaintances pick out a person in whose character strong traits are contrasted; then portray the character.

### *The Elements of a Story.*

In a novel, or in a shorter story, we read of persons who do certain things in certain places at certain times. We are told what the persons do, what they say, what they think; and the writer may comment upon these matters or upon something suggested by them. He must also tell us what his characters look like, and picture for us the places in which they act, so that the world of his story will resemble reality. A story-writer may even have to explain abstract ideas, to argue for beliefs, or to write sermons, in the course of his story; and it is also true that his writing as a whole may do any of these three things, yet be a story.

We have already enumerated the elements of a story: character portrayal, pictures of places, objects and persons, the recital of action, and the writer's comment. Out of these the story is built; and any combination of these elements that will pile up interest to a climax will make an effective story. There is no rule that prescribes either the order or the proportions of the elements; readers are always ready to welcome a new combination. Yet there are certain things that may be said about combining these elements.

*Setting.*—Either at or very near the beginning of his story, the writer must supply scenery enough to make a background, or rather, a field of action, for his characters. Just how fully he must picture the place in which his events begin, depends upon the case. He may say merely, "On a busy corner in down-town New York," or "Where the meadow brook flowed into the river," and then go ahead with what happened. On the other hand, he may devote paragraphs—pages in a novel—to the setting of his tale, before introducing a character or causing anything to happen. But some setting there must be from the very start; and as the story goes on the writer must constantly provide in advance a place in which his events can occur. Sometimes, of course, he will stop his story telling entirely and, because the scene is itself interesting, will picture it more fully than is necessary for the mere understanding of events. The skilful writer, however, gets the greatest value out of his setting with very little hindrance to the forward movement of his action. He does not tie his strings end to end, but plaits them—setting, character portrayal, action, and comment.

*Suggested Exercise:* Write a paragraph in which you picture the opening scene of a story and get the action started.

*Character Portrayal.*—When it is not a matter of action, character portrayal is like setting; it furnishes a basis upon which we may understand and judge the actions of the characters in the story. There is likely

to be a good deal of character portrayal near the beginning of a story, by way of introduction to the personages; and as each new personage enters, or as another side of one shows, there will be more. Occasionally, too, the writer will give particular attention to a character portrayal because the character is interesting in itself. Once again, however, the skilful writer gets the greatest value out of character portrayal with little hindrance to his action, especially since he can use action to portray character, as well as character to determine action.

*Suggested Exercise:* Add to the opening paragraph written as the last suggested exercise a paragraph in which you portray a character from the story you have begun.

*Action.*—It is not at all necessary that a story be crammed full of action. A little study of the best stories will show that in many of them the action is surprisingly slight; what actually happens can be told quite fully in a few paragraphs. What is essential is that the action shall rouse the reader's interest in its outcome, and keep him reading on with the feeling that he must get the minor events, the character portrayal, the setting, and the author's comment in order to appreciate the outcome. If a writer is to accomplish this he must distribute his action pretty evenly thruout the story, must weave it in with the other elements; and before he goes very far with his writing he should raise the narrative question, i. e., set the reader guessing as to what will happen in the end. In modern fiction this

is frequently done at the very beginning of the story, with a minimum of characterization and setting. The writer plunges into his tale, perhaps into the very middle of it; captures his reader's attention; and then returns to things that would be put first if the story were told chronologically. Such procedure is justified by success. In fact, past success justifies almost any ordering of events; many a detective story is practically told backwards, and often a writer deliberately withholds an event until long after the time order demands it, simply because telling that event would give away the outcome of the story.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Imagine a ten-page story, and then write a two-page synopsis of the action.

(b) Read a magazine story and then write a synopsis of it.

*Writer's Comment.*—Story-writers sometimes pause and comment upon what has just happened, or discuss a subject suggested by the story content, or judge a character, or draw out a moral. This is a difficult thing to do, because it may divert attention from the other elements of the story; yet it can be done effectively. In stories written in the first person there is, of course, less danger of breaking the story spell; for the one who makes the comment is himself in the tale. This suggests the fact that a good way for the writer to include his comment is to put it into the mouths of his characters, or to imply it in their reactions to things said and seen and done in the story. And it

is true that there is likely to be in a story some character who speaks for the writer. The danger is that this character may appear forced to fit into the tale. It is better that the comment should appear as such, than that the character should appear out of place.

In the writer's comment might be included, perhaps, whatever of description or characterization is introduced for its own sake; but that would be a needless splitting of hairs. Certainly, however, we must include as comment any introductory material that prepares the mind of the reader for the idea of the story, that furnishes a mental background. There is a story by "O. Henry" entitled "Squaring the Circle." It begins with a little essay upon art and nature, the straight line and the circle, an essay which makes a point that the story exemplifies. It is best to call such passages comment; they are unlike any of the other elements here treated.

### *Writing Stories.*

First in the writing of a story comes the germ idea. Germ ideas are to be found everywhere—in what has happened to the writer himself or to his friends, in the pages of the newspaper, in conversation, in the street crowd, in magazine advertisements, in one's general reading—anywhere. The trained eye has little difficulty in finding story ideas; and fortunately almost any eye can train itself. The thing to do is to practice looking for interesting ideas that can be

translated into action, for unusual "situations" that will serve as starting-points or conclusions to lines of action, and for unusual characters whose probable deeds will make good reading.

This points to several kinds of germ ideas. First among them is a notion or belief. Suppose a story-writer gets the idea that music is a language which almost everybody understands pretty well. He decides to build a story around that idea; and his next thought is that he can exemplify it by showing how rough, uneducated men are influenced by music. This reminds him that he knows woodsmen, and that he can use them in his story. But how? After a little thought, it occurs to him that he can send a stranger into a lumber camp, make him unpopular for some reason, and then have him gain favor thru musical ability. After that, writing the story is a matter of working out the character of the stranger and the reasons for his unpopularity, of inventing a line of action leading to the situation in which the stranger sings, or plays some instrument, and wins his way to the friendship and respect of his fellows.

*Suggested Exercise:* Express in story form some pet notion of your own.

Second, the story-writer may have in mind a certain character that interests him. Perhaps he knows a quiet little gray-haired woman who has spent forty years working in a library, and whose only interest lies in books, in their care and use. His imagination



plays around this figure. He sees her coming to the library every day at the same time, lunching at the same place, going home to the same little white cottage each evening. He hears her play the same old-fashioned, stately music after dinner, or pictures her reading favorite books until bed-time. Then it comes to him that some day soon all this will cease, and he sees that she is really a courageous, perhaps a tragic figure. But what is her story?—Perhaps he makes her and the assistant librarian fall in love back in the days when both were young, but places the barriers of library discipline and library zeal between them, so that neither of them betrays affection for the other. He traces their busy career, making them friendly rivals in building up their beloved library. The assistant becomes librarian, the quiet little woman becomes assistant; together they plan, work for, and win a new library building. Thus they spend their lives working together, but prevented by long habit from revealing the love they feel; or perhaps upon the death of one, the other learns the truth.

*Suggested Exercise:* Take some unusual character that you know, and put him into a story, making him do things that only he would be likely to do.

Probably the story-writer's germ idea is most frequently a happening or situation, already an idea of action. Then his task is either to carry the action forward from the idea, or to go back and invent action that will lead up to it. Sometimes, of course, he gets

hold of a complete story that needs only telling, maybe with a bit of patching here and there. But usually he has just the story idea to begin with.

Suppose he sees the mayor of a great city present a street-paver with an expensive cigar, and notices that the street-paver puts the cigar carefully away in his pocket. It occurs to him that the cigar is to be saved as a souvenir of the paver's interview with a great man. This is situation enough for the skilful story-teller. He could easily look ahead to what might come out of it, and invent a line of action leading to a decisive event of greatest interest.

*Suggested Exercise:* Write a little story beginning with or ending with a situation drawn from your own experience.

A story may be made up of a series of events bound together because certain characters act thruout, rather than because the events belong in a single line of action; or the events may be bound together by a common background. But usually a story presents a series of events that appear inevitable once the inciting force has set things moving. This kind of story has unity of action, and nearly always, also, the unity that comes from characters who act thruout, and the unity that comes because the story expresses a single idea or emotion. It is this kind of story that most writers try to produce.

When a writer puts down the events of such a story he must order and treat them so that they will hold

the reader's interest as the story progresses. He must ask and answer the question: How can I make people read to the end of this tale? Leaving out of account word-pictures, character portrayal and writer's comment, let us take up merely the ordering of events.

The writer may have events of such a nature that he can simply tell them in the order of occurrence, because they naturally grow in interest as the story progresses. But more frequently it will be advisable for him to juggle his events so that he begins with an occurrence of considerable interest and quickly raises the plot question. It may be wise to begin in the middle of the action, or even at the end, and then to go back and catch up. In such cases the minor events borrow interest from the attractive beginning, and are likewise interesting because they explain what has already been told, and lead with increasing certainty toward the answer to the plot question. That answer is found in the decisive event which determines or is the outcome of the story, or else in some key fact which has been kept from the reader until late in the story. The writer, of course, keeps back the answer as long as possible, so long as he can make his readers follow on in the belief that what they are reading is necessary to understanding and appreciating the outcome of it all.

Altho there is no prescribed order for the events of a story, certain phenomena are present in the plots of all stories that have unity of action. Somewhere there is an event that is the real beginning of the action. It

is often unimportant so far as interest goes, and is therefore told at the writer's convenience; but if the events are ordered chronologically, it will be found first among them. It is the happening that makes possible or inevitable the particular series of events in the story. Nothing that happened before this initial event may be admitted into the story as part of the line of action, altho prior happenings may perhaps be used to characterize personages. A certain story about John Smith begins definitely with a certain event, and it ends with equal definiteness; it is a particular part of all that has happened to John Smith.

A second phenomenon is the event—it may be the initial one—that raises the plot question. With this event begins the contest between the forces that are opposed in the story, the contest that is the plot; for the plot is not necessarily coterminous with the line of action. It is that part of the line of action which begins with the clash of forces and ends with the decisive event. After the decisive event there may be other events, the consequences that naturally follow from it.

Such are the outstanding facts about the action of a story. Of equal importance is the interest awakened in the reader. At the very beginning the story should lift him above the level of ordinary interest, and then it must hold him above that level. Wherever it takes him highest, there is the *climax*. Usually the climax, the height of the reader's interest, occurs at or near the decisive event; but not always. For the same story it may come at different places for different readers.

But the skillfully constructed story builds up the reader's interest so that the climax occurs near or at the end. The struggle grows increasingly keen, events crowd upon one another, comment becomes sharper, word-pictures and character portrayal become less frequent but more telling; in short, as the decisive event approaches, many things of lesser interest that suggest themselves must be left out in favor of things that hasten action. Nevertheless, the writer may deliberately slow up his action and lengthen the period of suspense when he can get related material of sufficient appeal to keep the reader's attention in spite of his desire to skip to the conclusion.

Perhaps the thing to say first and last about writing a story, is that it must be made up of events so related that they lead up to an outcome not foreseen, at least not foreseen until very near. The art of the story-teller lies in raising a question, then in continually hinting at possible answers to it, and finally in surprising us with the real answer. Therefore, when one is planning his work he should ask himself, "Can I tell this story so that the outcome will be a matter of uncertainty and yet appear inevitable when it comes? Can I keep my readers guessing?"

In order to answer these questions, the writer must put himself into the reader's place; he must try to feel, and to reason out, what effects his story elements will create. As he writes, therefore, he must constantly keep in mind what he has set down and what it implies; he must pay strict attention to the logic

of his tale, and see to it that the reader can draw only the right conclusions from the successive events.

Altho the writer must be faithful to the logic of his story, his events may be of the strangest sort. Readers turn to stories somewhat as they turn to the world of make-believe in fairy tales; they come prepared to make assumptions in favor of the story. Yet once these assumptions are made, they expect the events to be in keeping with them. The writer may invent such a character as never existed; but he must make that character do what such a person would naturally do. The same is true of events; they may arise out of even impossible situations, but they must be the true consequences of the situations. However, the stories likely to be most telling are those, no matter how unusual, to which readers can give real credence while they read. The master story-teller does not need the impossible; he needs only what actual life affords. Of course he may choose persons and places that are strange to his audience, because the strange piques our curiosity. Yet this is not necessary; for those things about which we habitually think are likewise interesting to us. There is nothing which the genius of the true narrator cannot weave into the fabric of a story. Certainly most things under the sun have been employed; genius has found ways to make them stir emotion, and that is what must be done. Anything will serve, so long as our curiosity can be roused or so long as we can be made to suffer or re-



joyce, to feel fear, anger, horror, remorse, even nausea. "Make them laugh, make them cry, make them wait"; and may we add, make them think—that is the formula. To put it another way: give them something new to understand thru what they already know about, or give them something old in a new combination; but be sure to give them life.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Let the teacher read a short story almost to the decisive event, and then have the class write conclusions for it.

(b) Write a story under one of several titles suggested by the teacher.

(c) Use your imagination and write a story about some unusual character seen at a football or baseball game or a track meet. Perhaps you sat next to just the character you need.

### *Explaining a Process.*

Explaining a process is in one way like telling a story, for the logic of the writing is the logic of cause and effect in time. But in explaining a process it is usually necessary to bring out in so many words the "why" of what happens, perhaps to cite the physical laws that govern the happenings, to state definitely how one thing acts upon another, not how one character reacts to those about him. We may say that the explanation of a process is a story of things, not of persons; for even when the processes have to do with

persons, the persons are regarded as so much clinical material.

The explanation of a process is more likely than a story to proceed in a straight course from beginning to end. The writer first assembles his materials and describes them as fully as is necessary to an understanding of what is to happen. He then starts his forces and follows them thru to the conclusion of the process. It may be, however, that the process is complex, that certain parts of it go on independently for a time and then come together. In such cases he may take up the divisions separately, and finally bring them together; or he may first give the result of their coming together; and then trace back each contributing line. In fact, the whole process may be told backwards in the sense that the result is given first. There is absolutely no rule for order—which means that the order will be dictated by the nature of the process itself. The writer must study his subject in order to discover the plan of his writing; and the outline of his writing will represent the main steps in the process to be explained, just as the outline of a writing that explains the structure of an animal, a plant, a mineral form, or a machine, represents its organic or component parts.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Explain fully how to tie a shoestring in a double-bow knot.

(b) Explain some manufacturing process with which you are familiar.

*Expounding an Idea.*

When a writer sets out to explain or expound an abstract idea, he must employ analysis, that is, he must to some extent define or divide. This is true even when he expounds his idea by implication, thru word-picture, character portrayal or story; for he cannot make these forms map out his idea unless he has first discovered its pattern. No writer could make a story enforce a moral, for example, unless he saw how the events of the story would build up the statement of the moral. That would amount to making an analysis of the idea expressed by the story.

But now we are particularly concerned with writing that expounds abstract ideas directly, explicitly, with writing that employs the methods of logical analysis openly and primarily. If any of the other forms so far treated appear in such writing, they are subordinate and make up only a part of the writing; they help to make clear some phase of the central idea.

Probably the first fact to recognize about writings that expound abstract ideas directly is that many of them employ the process of analysis not at all rigidly or completely; they are not attempts to make a strictly logical definition or division. It is the purpose of the writer that determines the thoroughness of his analysis. Suppose, for example, that a writer sets out to expound this idea in a familiar essay: The fireplace is

one of man's most cherished institutions. Suppose he begins by conjecturing the origin of the fireplace, showing how it was devised to meet certain needs, and how it came after very crude predecessors. Then he might pass to the days when rude warriors gathered at night about huge fireplaces stacked with blazing logs, and made the rafters ring with their loud laughter, their singing and brawling. Thus he could show how the fireplace began to contribute to the pleasure of man's leisure hours. He could then write of the distribution of the fireplace, of the forms it has assumed, and of the traditions that have come to be associated with it. Finally he could show how it persists in many places where it is no longer needed, but where it is kept for its cheer, or merely as a sort of ornament. And here he could point out the bogus fireplace, the blind mantel, which is a potent sign of man's fondness for the real fireplace.

This brief sketch of a supposed essay indicates some definition of "fireplace" thru an account of its origin, and some division of "fireplace" in the discussion of the various forms it has assumed. Its development as an institution is likewise roughly divided into periods. But there is no attempt to define or divide exactly and completely. The writer's purpose does not require that; it requires that he shall choose, from all the facts about the fireplace as a cherished institution, only those facts which he finds both relevant and interesting. He determines whether facts are relevant by making a rough analysis of his subject; he deter-

mines whether facts are interesting by asking whether they will pique and satisfy the curiosity of his supposed readers, or rouse in them some other feeling that will keep them reading.

Perhaps the degree of logical completeness and exactness shown in our supposed essay is about that ordinarily found in writings that expound ideas. Many writings, especially familiar essays, pay less heed to formality, to logic; scientific or philosophical essays or treatises show much greater concern for exact and complete definition and division. The things to remember are that no writings can expound without analyzing to some extent, and that it is usually impossible, as well as unnecessary, to make a strictly logical definition and division. Nevertheless it is of the greatest importance to attempt a strict analysis in the very subjects where such analysis is most difficult to make; for it is by analysis that we learn about new things, or learn new facts about old things. Therefore it is important here to discover what an exact and complete analysis is—an analysis made up of logical definition and logical division.

*A logical definition* of an idea puts that idea into a class and sets it off from other members of the class. There are, then, three parts of a logical definition: (1) the idea defined; (2) the class to which it belongs, or the genus; (3) the differentia or differentiae, the characteristic or characteristics that make the idea different from all other members of the genus. It is very difficult to make a strictly logical definition,

even of the most common things. Suppose, for example, that one attempted to define "chair" logically, so that the idea "chair" could not include any such article of furniture as the stool or the *chaise longue* or the davenport. It would require a good deal of ingenuity to get hold of a differentiating statement that would serve. Suppose the definition were: (Idea) A chair (Genus) is an article of furniture (Differentia) intended to hold a person or persons in a sitting posture. It had to be "persons" to include the rolling chairs used at sea-shore resorts. "In a sitting posture" was put in to exclude the *chaise longue* and similar articles of furniture; but it makes difficulty because of the Morris chair, in which one is expected occasionally to recline. Likewise, this definition does not exclude the stool or the bench. Nor would it do to make the definition read, A chair is an article of furniture intended to hold a person or persons in a sitting or reclining position, and provided with a support for the back. There are stools with backs, and this definition clearly includes the davenport, etc.

It does not appear easy to phrase a reasonably short logical definition of "chair." The reason is that we have not been particularly concerned with logic in our use of the word; and the same is true of thousands of common terms. Therefore it will be better to turn for an example of logical definition to some field where logic has been hard at work, say to mathematics. Take the following definition of "triangle": (Idea)



A triangle (Genus) is a plane figure (Differentia) bounded by three straight lines. This statement shuts out other plane figures from the idea "triangle," and includes all triangles. That makes the definition logical. From another field of thought comes the definition, "Philosophy is the science of sciences." Perhaps it is logical; perhaps someone can show that philosophy deals with certain matters not scientific. In the latter case the definition requires a new differentia. Another example of logical definition may be taken from the field of play: A euchre deck is a pack of playing cards made up of fifty-two cards divided into four suits of thirteen each, with a fifty-third card called the joker.

It is probably not necessary further to characterize the euchre deck in order to make a logical definition of it. But if one were to explain fully the idea "euchre deck," he would have to go beyond the definition and into a division of the cards; and he would find a perfect logical division—more than one, in fact. First of all, the cards are divided into four suits according to the shape and the color of the designs that appear upon them. Shape is the essential characteristic, for each suit has its own shape but shares its color with another suit. Next the cards are divided into ace, face cards and number cards within each suit, in order that each card may be identified. The joker makes up a division by itself. The cards are further divided according to value or power, and different games require different divisions of this sort.

It is true of each of the divisions just named that no card can belong in two subdivisions, that every card is included somewhere, and that cards not belonging in a euchre deck are excluded. That makes the successive divisions logical.

Still using the euchre deck, let us see how closely bound together are logical definition and logical division. In making the definition of "euchre deck" it was necessary to get hold of characteristics that would set off such a deck from other playing cards, such as "Authors" or "Flinch" cards, or cards used in playing vocabulary games. But to do this is to divide the genus "playing cards" into euchre cards and all others, that is, to make a division of the genus that is logical as far as it goes. Therefore in defining we must divide.

And when we pass to the dividing of "euchre deck," it becomes necessary to define each division logically in order to know that the divisions are mutually exclusive and that they include the whole pack of cards. Thus it is impossible to divide without defining, as it was to define without dividing. This does not mean that every writing which expounds an idea *both* defines and divides that idea. The writing may merely place the idea in a class and set it off from other members of the class, without breaking the idea into its component parts or into the subclasses that belong within it. On the other hand, the writing may merely name its idea and then proceed to treat the parts of it. Of course, if the treatment

covers the whole of the idea, it in effect defines it by equalling it, but not in the formal way.

In making a logical division it is necessary to adhere strictly to one principle. "College Students" might be divided according to credit already earned. Thus we should get freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate. Students might also be divided according to social affiliations into fraternity men and independents, or according to race. Each of these divisions might be logical, but it would not do to divide students into sophomores, independents, and Russians. There is no logic in such a division, because no single principle is applied to discover the sub-classes within the class "college students."

From what has already been said, the student should be able to discover the process of logical analysis at work in what he reads. Practice will train him to read for logical structure, and thus rapidly, constructively. Of equal value is the ability to employ analysis effectively in original work. Suppose that out of his college experience a certain student has got the idea, "College makes students superficially alike, but develops inner differences of personality." It is his purpose to expound this idea for his fellows. How can he use analysis? Already a two-fold division is suggested: he may divide students' characteristics into inner and outer, or fundamental and superficial. This is a division that will probably run thruout his essay. But he must write of these two classes of characteristics

as they are affected by college life, and he therefore needs a scheme of division that will show the development of students. Perhaps the well-known division into classes will serve; or perhaps he can write first of the inner and outer characteristics of entering freshmen, then skip sophomores and juniors, and finish with the characteristics of graduating seniors. Thus, to a framework provided by a division of characteristics and a division of students, he could probably attach all that he wished to say in expounding his idea. Yet a close examination of his writing might reveal other divisions subordinate to these.

The point to be made here is that a writer can consciously employ definition and division just as division has been employed in the preceding paragraph, and that he can thus find a way to treat any subject within his knowledge. Perhaps the point should be made that one cannot get at the meaning of things in any other way than by analysis, and that we employ it naturally. But it is well to emphasize the fact that analysis can be consciously employed, for frequently when a writer gets "stuck" he can extricate himself by its conscious use; and such use of analysis is also effective in the criticism of one's own writing. Finally, when one has work of investigation to do, he can proceed most effectively by consciously employing definition and division to reduce his gathered facts to order. In other words, he can substitute deliberate constructive analysis for mere gathering of isolated facts, and

thus greatly hasten the process of organization that must go on if he is ever to understand the facts gathered, or even to retain them well.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Make a logical definition of "traveler," or "pencil," or "automobile." Explain, in a short theme, just how you worked out the definition.

(b) Make a logical division of "travelers," or of some collection of books numbering at least twenty-five. Use the division as the basis for an essay. Remember that if the essay is to be worth while the division will have to be original as well as logical.

(c) Take one of Francis Bacon's essays and discover what use he makes of definition and division. Do the same for an essay by G. K. Chesterton. Then compare the two in a theme.

### *Defending a Belief.*

When a writer defends a belief, the statement of his belief, the *proposition*, expresses his central idea. His task is not merely to make this idea clear, but to state the facts that convince him of its truth. The whole thought content of his writing is made up, first, of the central idea in expanded form, and second, of the facts that support it. The links between the two are supplied by inference, for it is by inference that men are convinced of things they cannot actually know. Thus it comes about that writing which defends a belief employs certain logical patterns, the patterns of inference.

The first and the weakest form of inference is *analogical* inference. It is based upon the principle that one member of a class is similar to another member. Because something is true of a certain member of a class, it concludes that the same thing is true of another member. Suppose the class is "intramural contests in universities." The inference then might run as follows: Intramural contests at Midland University are desirable; intramural contests at Pacific University are like those at Midland; therefore intramural contests at Pacific University are desirable.

This type of inference is perhaps most frequently called citing an example. Its strength depends, first, upon the nature of the characteristic in question, upon whether it is a characteristic likely to persist thruout the class. In the case given, is desirability a characteristic that intramural contests would probably possess at Pacific University if they possessed desirability at another university? The answer to this question depends in turn upon whether surrounding conditions at the two universities are alike, and whether the intramural contests at Pacific are to be like those at Midland, really members of the same class.

The preceding will become clearer if we consider an example of *false analogy*, which is often called merely analogy: That bad apple spoiled a peck of good ones; therefore this bad boy has spoiled these other boys that were good. Here the classes are different—bad apples, bad boys; and the conditions surrounding the bad things are different. Even if we say that the class is



bad things, there is so great a difference between bad apples and bad boys that the conclusion is far from certain. It would be certain only if we could say, any bad thing will spoil others of its kind by contact. False analogy, then, in spite of its frequent use as argument, is chiefly valuable as explanation, illustration.

The second form of inference is *induction*. It makes the assumption that all the members of a class are like one or more of the members. Thus it goes from a particular statement about members of a class to a general statement covering the class. For example: Inter-class games at Chicago, Harvard, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Yale Universities are desirable; all university inter-class games are like these games; therefore all university interclass games are desirable. Examination of this example shows that a number of the members of the class "university inter-class games" have been examined, that these members have been found to have a certain characteristic, and that this characteristic has been ascribed to the remaining unexamined members of the class. The strength of such an inference depends, first, upon the number of members examined. The nearer that number approaches the total of the class, the more certain it becomes that the given characteristic will be found throughout the class. Second, the strength of induction depends upon the nature of the characteristic considered. In the example cited, is desirability a characteristic that will probably belong to all members of the class if it belongs to several members, or is it a superficial

characteristic likely to be missing? From observation of several crows we might conclude that all crows have wings, because wings would be an essential class characteristic; but we could not with the same certainty affirm that crows always step, i. e., move one foot after the other, because the crows observed did not hop or jump. Neither could we, because one crow was black, so safely infer that all crows were black. Even after observing many black crows, it would be dangerous to conclude that all crows are black, for color is a characteristic possibly subject to change.

The third form of inference is *deduction*. It is based upon the principle that each member of a class has whatever characteristics are possessed by the whole class. Therefore the inference goes from a general statement covering the class to a particular statement about some member or members of the class. For example: All university inter-class games are desirable; Midland's inter-class games are university inter-class games; therefore Midland's inter-class games are desirable.

The strength of deductive inference depends, first, upon the validity of the general statement. Is it true, for instance, that all university inter-class games are desirable? That would be the first question to ask in testing the example just given. The next question would be: Are Midland's inter-class games university inter-class games? That is, are they really members of the class into which they have been put? If either of these questions is answered in the negative, the con-

clusion falls; if both are answered affirmatively, it stands. In order to invalidate the general statement when testing deduction, one looks within the class for members to which it does not apply, or shows that it does not hold true under all circumstances.

Perhaps it will be well now to set down in pattern form examples of the three kinds of inference. The student should notice how the inference runs in each of the examples: in analogy from part of the class to part of the class, in induction from part of the class to all of the class, in deduction from all of the class to part of the class.

### *Inference*

#### *Analogical*

John's crow is black (particular statement).

Henry's crow is like John's (particular statement).

Therefore Henry's crow is black (particular statement).

#### *Inductive*

The crows I saw last summer were black (particular statement).

All crows are like the crows I saw last summer (general statement).

Therefore all crows are black (general statement).

#### *Deductive*

All crows are black (general statement).

This bird is a crow (particular statement).

Therefore this bird is black (particular statement).

*The Syllogism.*—Of the three forms of true inference treated above, induction and deduction are usually taken together as forms of *reasoning*. But it is the deductive pattern, the syllogism, by which writing that defends a belief is largely put together, altho the other forms of inference play important parts.

The syllogism is made up of three statements: major premise, minor premise, conclusion. The major premise is a general statement covering a class; the minor premise is a particular statement that identifies its subject as a member of the class; and the conclusion is a particular statement that says of the identified member what the major premise says of the whole class. The following example will make this clear. It will also show that a syllogism has three terms, and where they occur.

|                |               |      |               |
|----------------|---------------|------|---------------|
|                | (Middle Term) |      | (Major Term)  |
| Major premise: | All men       | are  | mortal.       |
|                | (Minor Term)  |      | (Middle Term) |
| Minor premise: | John          | is   | a man.        |
|                | (Minor Term)  |      | (Major Term)  |
| Conclusion:    | Therefore     | John | is mortal.    |

The shortened form of the syllogism is called the *enthymeme*. It consists of either the major or the minor premise and the conclusion, one premise being understood. The two possible enthymemes for the syllogism just given would be: All men are mortal;

therefore John is mortal, and, John is a man; therefore John is mortal. It is the enthymeme that is used mainly in defending a belief. With this in mind we can pass to a study of the brief, which is the logical outline of what the writer has to say in defense of his proposition.

*The Brief.*—A brief is an outline made up of three parts, introduction, argument, and conclusion. The first item, however, is the proposition. Next comes the introduction, containing an outline of any necessary history of the question, a brief statement of any definition of terms to be used in the writing, perhaps some explication of the proposition as a whole, a statement of anything that may be taken for granted or waived, and a statement of the issues, the main points to be proved.

In the body of the brief, or the argument, the proposition is again stated, and then the proofs that support it are ranged under it in logical outline. The several statements are numbered or lettered, and indented, so as to show their rank and interrelationship. Such a connective as “for” or “because” is also used between any statement and those that support it. It is this “for” pattern that distinguishes the brief from other logical outlines. “For” fits between the proposition and the main points, between the main points and those immediately subordinate to them, and so on down to the bottom facts.

In the conclusion of the brief appears an outline of the conclusion that is to be made in the writing.

The conclusion of the brief may, then, include an outline summary made up of the main points and the proposition. It may also include an outline of any plea to be made on the basis of belief in the proposition, or an outline of any other application of the proposition.

The preceding is a rough account of the contents of a brief. Let us see now how one goes about the making of a brief. First he must determine exactly the statement of his belief; he must put his proposition into the words that express its idea most clearly. In doing this he must be especially careful not to beg the question, that is, not to assume what he is starting out to prove. "Colleges should discontinue the undesirable practice of holding examinations," begs the question because it calls examinations undesirable when that is the fact to be proved about them. It is also a poor proposition because it is indefinite. Does it mean *all* examinations, or just written examinations, or just final examinations? If it means all examinations, it is foolishly one-sided. The proposition might read, "Colleges should discontinue the practice of holding final written examinations." People might be of different minds about that, and it would be clear.

Having determined the statement of his proposition, the writer may see that some explanation of how the question arose will be necessary for his expected readers. This information is the history of the question, and an outline statement of it is frequently the first item in the introduction to the brief. The history



leads naturally to any necessary definition of the terms used in the proposition, or to any explanation of the proposition as a whole; for it is in the development of the question that the terms acquire special significance. With the history well in mind, the writer will have little difficulty in defining his terms or explaining his proposition as a whole. These things he will do next, briefly, in the introduction, if they are necessary.

In some cases material that is to be taken for granted must be presented as such, in order both to show that the writer knows what he is about and to relieve him of treating the admitted material in his proof. There will be an item representing this material in the introduction to the brief.

When the writer is doing the thinking—usually reading also—that is necessary to determining just what his proposition shall be, he will probably discover certain important ideas that are related directly to the proposition. These may turn out to be his main points, his issues; at any rate they will be clues to the issues, to the statements that must be proved in order to prove the proposition. After the question has been studied, after all available material has been amassed, the issues are decided upon by analysis of the subject matter. They are main points in a division of the subject matter; and the rules for logical division govern their making. Each should cover its own ground only; none can be equivalent to the proposition; and all of

them taken together must include all that is to be proved.

When the proposition asserts that something should or should not be done, it will be helpful in finding the issues to ask in what ways the proposed action will benefit or harm those concerned. Usually this will uncover two or three main kinds of benefit or harm under which subordinate material can be ranged in order. When the proposition asserts something as a fact, it will be helpful to ask about the probability and the possibility of the thing asserted, and to look for direct, first-hand evidence that it is a fact.

The issues are the final item in the introduction to the brief, unless the question is so complex that two divisions need to be made of it, a simple one for the statement of issues, and another, containing more points, to be used in the body of the brief. In such a case the division into issues—say two, three, or four—is made to give a bird's-eye view of the question; while the other division, called the "partition" and containing, say, five or more points, breaks up the subject matter into units more readily handled in presenting proof. For example, the issues in a certain case might be: (1) Is the proposed plan workable? and (2) Will it benefit the people of our city? The partition might be: (1) Is the proposed plan sound financially? (2) Is it legal? (3) Will it benefit our citizens physically? (4) Will it benefit them mentally? (5) Will it benefit them morally?

As for the actual statement of the issues, they may be put as questions or as declarative sentences in the introduction to the brief. They may be questions because they are the only material in the introduction that requires proof, that is not admitted as fact. Both the writer and the reader who is to be convinced must stand upon the same ground. They must agree upon the history of the question, the meaning of the proposition, and the granted material; and they must agree that the issues are really the issues, before there can be a meeting of minds, before the reader can be convinced.

When all of the foregoing items that are necessary in a given case have been put into the introduction, it is possible for the writer to test the organization of his material. He can make the test by framing a syllogism that will use material according to this pattern:

Major premise: grounds for argument, i. e., basis  
admitted.

Minor premise: issues

Conclusion: proposition

This test will be illustrated in the specimen brief that follows. The student should note that the syllogistic test shows merely that the organization is right, that when the issues have been proved or disproved the proposition will stand or fall. It is not a test of the proof used to support the issues.

*Brief*

Proposition: Varsity baseball players should be allowed to play professional ball in vacation.

## I. Introduction

A. *History of the Question*: Certain colleges and universities have long declared ineligible to the varsity baseball squad all men who have at any time played ball for money, calling such men "professionals." Every season the matter comes up anew, for there is always violation of the rule, or attempted violation, or accusations of violation.

B. *Explanation of the Proposition*: The proposition stated above applies only to bona fide full-time students who have complied with the one-year residence rule and are in good scholastic standing.

C. *Definition*: A student is a "professional" if he has played ball for money, or played in a game, other than a college game, to which spectators paid admission.

D. *It is granted*: that college athletes should be kept free from the spirit of true professionalism; that the proposed plan will succeed only if the one-year residence rule and the scholastic requirements are enforced by school officials; and that there is no way under either system to keep interested persons from financing a student because he can play well.

E. *Issues:*

1. The proposed plan will be fairer than the present system.
2. It will raise the standard of college baseball.
3. It will benefit the students morally.
4. It will discourage the professional spirit in college athletics.

F. *Syllogistic Test:*

(Major Premise: Grounds) Any eligibility plan that will be fairer than the present plan and will benefit athletics, athletes and other students, should be adopted.

(Minor Premise: Issues) Allowing varsity baseball players to play professional ball in vacation is a plan that will be fairer than the present plan, will raise the standard of college baseball, will benefit the students morally, and will discourage the professional spirit in college athletics.

(Conclusion: Proposition) Therefore, allowing varsity baseball players to play professional ball in vacation is a plan that should be adopted.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Argument

Varsity baseball players should be allowed to play professional ball in vacation, for

<sup>1</sup> In this case, as in many cases, it is difficult to phrase the syllogism so that the conclusion is the proposition in so many words. Whenever it can be so phrased, that should be done; but the essential thing is that the conclusion should state the meaning of the proposition.

- A. Such a system will be fairer than the present system, for
1. It will not, as the present system does, deprive certain students of the right to represent their school because they have earned money by playing ball, rather than by selling goods, farming, making speeches, singing, etc., occupations not more honorable than playing ball.
  2. It will not, as the present system does, force certain students to make financial sacrifices in order to play upon the varsity team.
  3. It will not, as the present system does, keep out of college certain men who could make their own way if permitted to play professional ball in vacation. (Examples)
- B. This plan will raise the standards of college baseball, for
1. It will permit the use of the best players in the student body.
  2. (Objection answered) It will not discourage try-outs for the varsity squad, for
    - a. The team being better, there will be more incentive to win a place upon it.
    - b. More men will come out to take advantage of the better opportunity to learn.
  3. It will improve all those who might become varsity players, for
    - a. It will sharpen competition.
    - b. It will afford the poorer players more opportunity to learn from example.
- C. This plan will benefit the students morally, for



1. It will do away with the temptation that sometimes leads "professional" players to perjury in order to secure places upon the varsity team.
  2. It will free the student body from the questionable practice of covering up any professionalism they know about, which they now do in the belief that a bad rule is better broken than kept.
- D. This plan will discourage the professional spirit in college athletics, for
1. Those who play will have to be bona fide students, for
    - a. They will have to obey the one-year residence rule.
    - b. They will have to maintain average scholastic standing.
    - c. If schools fall back upon these rules, they will be more rigidly enforced.
  2. Real professional players will not come to the colleges, for
    - a. There will be no financial gain to attract them.
    - b. They lack the scholastic interest that would enable them to endure the rigors of the classroom either for glory or for money.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Summary of the main points, with the proposition as the conclusion.
- B. Plea that students work for adoption of the proposed plan.

The student should note certain facts about the specimen brief, in addition to those previously mentioned. First, it is so worded that any main point can be read with the proposition as partial proof of the proposition. Likewise any other point can be read, as proof, with the one to which it is immediately subordinate. In other words, examination of the specimen brief will show that it is made up of chains of enthymemes, i. e., syllogisms with one premise understood. Each chain runs from the proposition through a main point to subordinate points.

The specimen brief, then, is wholly deductive as it stands. But what about the examples that are to be used as proof of Point 3 under A? Use of such examples will be either true analogy or induction; for it will run: Since these men have been kept from college, others (or, all others) like them have been and will be kept from college. So the last link in the chain, the link that fastens to fact, is not deductive in this case. Suppose further that we supply what is beneath the statement that true professionals lack the scholastic interest which would enable them to endure classroom work. The argument will run: Because real professionals that we have known have lacked this interest, all real professionals do and will lack it. This is induction, and shows once more how induction may be employed to support deduction. But in some cases the basic fact used is a general statement, a major premise, grounded in common knowledge or com-

mon sense. For example: The proposed system will improve the poorer players because it will sharpen competition (B, 2, a). This inference depends upon the understood major premise: Any system that will sharpen competition will improve the poorer players. Since there is probably no need to back up this generalization, it may be thought of as the basic fact in its place. If, however, it were to be supported, the support would naturally be inductive.

One further fact requires comment. Wherever an objection is likely to be urged against a point, the objection is included as the next point of the same rank, and then answered. The objection is denied in such a manner as to show clearly what it is. It is given equal rank with the point against which it is urged, because if the objection stands the point falls.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Make a brief for the negative of the proposition used in the specimen brief.

(b) Make a brief for some proposition now current in the life of your school.

*The Written Defense.*—The brief is but a guide, a map, and a test of the writer's logic. After the brief is made, comes the actual writing; and it is much like any other writing. It contains the four elements of discourse in varying proportions. It reads like writing that expounds an idea; and like such writing it may be thrown into the form of a story, altho in such a case there will probably be no brief.

Something helpful may perhaps be said about writing from a brief. It is first a matter of expansion, of putting flesh upon the skeleton, of turning logic into life. The finished writing must not bristle with "first," "second," therefore," "our opponents," etc. It must conceal its logic under a style as simple, as various, as forceful, as the style of any earnest and effective essay. The order employed in the brief must here and there be reversed for the sake of variety and force; there must be nothing wooden about the structure of the writing. Example, anecdote, quotations, description, anything enlivening and useful, may be employed. And the tone must not be more belligerent than facts warrant—in fact, not quite so belligerent as might be excused. Above all, there must be absolute fairness to all who might possibly differ.

Much more could be said here, but it would apply to other kinds of writing as well, and has been, or will be, said elsewhere. Perhaps this should be emphasized: Writing which defends a belief, in spite of its regard for logic in its general structure, nevertheless employs all of the methods of development in its sentence-groups, and uses freely such forms of writing as word-pictures, character portrayals and stories.

*Suggested Exercises:* (a) Write for or against the proposition used in the specimen brief.

(b) Write a defense of some belief that you regard as peculiarly your own.

*Persuasion.*

After the reader has been made to sense, to understand and to believe, there may yet remain the task of making him act—perhaps the most difficult task of all, the task of persuasion. Maybe a better statement would be that sometimes we wish to make a reader sense, understand or believe, or all three, in such a way as to make him act; for making him act is always contingent upon one or more of the other three.

In order to persuade a reader, to rouse him to action, it is necessary to touch something vital to him. You must make the act you wish him to perform a matter of his own interest. In order to do this, it is necessary, first, to discover what already interests him, and then to trace out connections between your interest and his interest, and to join them. Fortunately there are many interests held pretty much in common, and upon which writers may depend in the main, partly because any particular interest is likely to be grafted to one of them. These great general interests are such as patriotism, love of home, love of relatives, friendship, desire to see justice done, desire for ease, for money, for beautiful things, for health. To such feelings as these the writer must appeal when he would stir to action. Therefore he must study his subject matter and find out what facts within it, what phases of it, will stimulate a desire already felt by his readers. Then he should set forth the stimulating facts as clearly and

strongly as he can, and in such a manner that his readers may see how they can satisfy their desires by performing the act he wishes them to perform.

From the foregoing it is clear that persuasion requires a fine adjustment between writer and reader. The writer must be a good practical psychologist, must have a close knowledge of his reader. He must remember, too, that he is playing directly upon the emotions of his reader, and that while he may do this partly by showing his own emotion, he can easily overdo that method. He may show so much emotion that the reader will react against it, or put the writer down as one too easily moved.

Persuasion is not to be achieved only thru direct use of the logical forms commonly employed to defend a belief, the forms of "argumentation." Just as one may argue indirectly thru other forms, so one may persuade by word-pictures, character portrayals, and stories. On the eve of an election, a certain political speaker faces a mass-meeting and, instead of presenting a closely reasoned statement showing why voters should favor his candidate, he simply sketches the candidates "sterling character" and relates certain happenings from his life. If he does this well, he may move his audience to the desired action. In another case he may win votes for the founding of a city hospital merely by picturing scenes of misery that such a hospital would relieve. In either case the inference is clear, but not necessarily made explicit.



*Methods and Tasks.*

Certain of the methods of development treated in Chapter III are more likely than others to be used in performing one or another of the representative tasks discussed in this chapter. In word-pictures, for instance, giving concrete particulars is the method most frequently found in the sentence-groups. However, many cases of comparison occur, since comparison is a kind of wholesale picturing. In character portrayal we find mostly explication, which is really giving abstract particulars, since it lists the qualities that make up the character. It makes an explanation of the statement that sums up the character, that expresses its essence. In stories and in explanations of processes, the prevalent methods are giving concrete particulars and stating causes and effects, altho all the methods are used freely, especially in stories. In writings that expound ideas definition and explication are perhaps dominant, but they are followed closely by comparison and example. In writing that defends a belief reasons naturally occur most frequently. All this means, once more, that written discourse is a fabric of infinite complexity; for all of the forms treated in this chapter may employ any of the methods of development in their sentence-groups, and there are many possible combinations in joint and subordinate use of methods.

## CHAPTER VI

### FORCE IN WRITING

What makes writing forceful?—The answer is not to be given in a word. It is a matter, first, of grammatical construction, of the logic of your language; second, of choice of words; and third, of rhetorical construction, the ordering of ideas. It is also a matter of sincerity, of a real desire to say something to others. Without zeal, a writer cannot avail himself of his technical resources; with it, he can command them as he will, provided he has technical resources. No amount of zeal to play will avail much on a tennis court unless the player has developed his strokes; nor will his strokes be effective if his will to play is weak. Nobody can provide him with zeal, but he can be taught proper form. It is the same in writing.

We commonly think of grammar as a body of rules to be obeyed, and do not ask why they must be obeyed. They must be obeyed because in the main they are matters of common agreement, rules adopted in order that we may understand one another. In fact, they are the logic of our language, naturally developed. This does not mean that they are so sacred as never to be broken; for of course they are constantly chang-

ing, and always some of them are doubtful. It means merely that a writer must be guided in his construction first by grammar. Grammar sets limits within which he may manipulate the words he uses. Yet grammar makes a positive contribution to force; for to write ungrammatically is ordinarily to write ineffectively.

In order to write forcefully, one must be economical in the use of words; that is, one must, with certain qualifications, use the smallest number of words that will fully express his meaning for his readers. This does not mean the smallest number in which it is possible to state his idea, but the fewest of words suitable to his readers in general, suitable to the tone of his writing, and suitable to its sound patterns. The principle of economy stated above is thus subject to qualification; choice of words is a matter of compromise.

The following sentence is taken from a humorous essay: "Infancy is not what it is cracked up to be." In this sentence, "said to be," altho shorter by a word, would not be racy enough, would not maintain the humorous tone as "cracked up to be" does; nor would it do to substitute "reputed to be" or "alleged to be." Neither would it do to say "Infancy is overrated." The flavor is wrong, and the meaning is not clear. Of course if a shorter expression gave the same humorous result and were otherwise suitable, it would be more forceful, altho in such a case as this the difference

might not be appreciable. But suppose that over a page or two of writing suitable and shorter expressions could be substituted in fifteen or twenty places. Surely the gain in force would be felt. As Herbert Spencer puts it, the ideas would be presented so that they could be apprehended with less mental effort, hence more forcefully presented. There would be fewer words to understand; and as long as the words were equally familiar to the reader, he would save mental energy. To use Ben Jonson's word, the writing would be done more "pressly."

Suppose the sentence quoted above were changed to: "That part of life during which we are dependent upon our elders is not so delightful as it is commonly said to be." In this form twelve words are used to equal "infancy," and the loss of force is easily felt. Also, while the original idea is retained, once more the words used do not strike the humorous note.

In prose, no less than in poetry, one must take pains to get words that sound well together, unless he deliberately chooses dissonant combinations because their roughness will enforce his idea. This is a matter that it is better to leave to the ear of the learner than to explain, as it would have to be explained, by a complicated treatment of the sounds used in our language; for it is doubtful that a body of scientific rules could ever take the place of a good ear. Therefore notice the unpleasant sound of the first member in the preceding sentence. Besides being wordy and involved, that

part of the sentence is ineffective because it repeats unpleasantly the sound of "t." Unpleasant repetition of sounds must, then, be avoided.

Likewise combinations difficult to pronounce, except when employed to detain the reader upon an idea or to produce an unpleasant effect, must be avoided. Perhaps the combination "must, then," used just above, is excusable because it detains the reader and compels him to get the force of "then." It aids the punctuation marks in that office. But consider the sentence, "A harsh shout shattered the silence." Here the matter is overdone, very much as it is in the non-sensical, "She sells shells by the seashore."

There is a large group of words whose sounds suggest their meanings. In the case of words naming sounds, they may clearly imitate the sounds named. Such words are: rasp, sizzle, rattle, roar, squeak, squeal, bawl, moan. Others more remotely suggest their meanings, such as, whisk, fritter, thin, spurt. The force of an imitative word comes from the fact that it emphasizes its meaning by being an example of it.

As for long and short words, if two words are equally well suited to the reader, equivalent in meaning, right in sound and in association, then the shorter is probably the better. But these conditions are rarely fulfilled. All cases must be decided separately. Now meaning, now suitability to reader, now sound, now association or tone, will be the consideration that determines the choice.

Specific words are sometimes said to be more forceful than general words. Spencer gives as the cause of this that we think in particulars, in images, and that a saving of energy is effected by using specific expressions which immediately suggest images, rather than general expressions which must be translated into images. He uses the following example as being too general: "In proportion as the manners, customs, and amusements of a nation are cruel and barbarous, the regulations of their penal code will be severe." Stop now and ask yourself, first whether you had any difficulty in understanding that sentence, second, what specific cases you called up to stand for "cruel and barbarous manners, customs and amusements," and for "severe regulations of penal code." Probably you had no difficulty and called to mind no ideas more specific than those directly presented. But this is proof only that we do think satisfactorily in general terms, not that more specific terms are less forceful.

Let us consider the sentence that Spencer would substitute for the one just quoted. His more specific form is: "In proportion as men delight in battles, bull-fights, and combats of gladiators, will they punish by hanging, burning, and the rack." Certainly this sentence is likely to make a more vivid impression than the other, because it is more likely to call up images. But on the face of it, it does not mean the same as the other; and even if one did happen to generalize it into the exact meaning of the other sentence, he would have to expend considerable energy in the proc-



ess. In fact, it would probably be harder to generalize the more specific sentence than it would be to particularize the more general one—if, indeed, either were necessary or likely to be done. It seems doubtful that, given either of these sentences, anybody would think the meaning of the other. Perhaps it is clear now that the matter of securing force is not one of choosing between general and specific expressions, but of choosing whichever kind is needed to make the reader think the right thoughts.

The statement that Anglo-Saxon words are more forceful than those derived from other languages is true only in general. Anglo-Saxon words are not to be chosen invariably when there is a possibility of choice. We do not always say “dog” in place of “canine,” or “word” in place of “vocalable.” Once more the choice depends upon the nature of our readers, upon the tone proper to our writing, and upon the meaning of the words in question—synonyms differ in connotation. It is true that a preponderance of Anglo-Saxon words makes forceful writing for the general reader, but even for him the right word will frequently be from Latin or from Greek. Whether a word is familiar or unfamiliar to expected readers is a much more important consideration than whether it is Anglo-Saxon. In fact, it is mainly the commonness of Anglo-Saxon words that gives them what advantage they have in force.

After choice of words in securing force, comes the matter of arranging words, or better, of ordering the

parts of sentences and paragraphs. Of course the forms of grammar must be observed; but they leave room for the operation of certain rhetorical principles. One of these is that the more significant parts of a sentence or a paragraph should usually be given the stronger positions in the sentence or the paragraph. The stronger positions are the beginning and the end, the end being strongest. The principle just stated must work in conjunction with others; for instance, words or statements that belong together grammatically or in thought, should usually be close together in the sentence or the paragraph; and, a word or other expression may sometimes be given emphasis by placing it out of its natural order, especially when it can be placed at the beginning of the larger unit. Finally, it will be necessary to keep in mind that introductory and connective expressions demand their proper place in spite of our principles, that a change of type will give stress to an expression, and that interpolated words or expressions sometimes receive unusual attention because they interrupt what is plainly important.

Let us turn now to several examples. A very interesting sentence to work with is one used by both Dr. Whately and Herbert Spencer.<sup>1</sup> Spencer first gives it as follows: "We came to our journey's end, at last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather." It is easy to see that this sentence begins with the fact of greatest importance, and then fails to hold the reader's in-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. his, "The Philosophy of Style."

terest. In Spencer's final version it reads as follows: "At last, with no small difficulty, and after much fatigue, we came, through deep roads and bad weather, to our journey's end." This is certainly better; but let us now put the parts into what is probably the natural order; "Through deep roads and bad weather, with no small difficulty and after much fatigue, we came at last to our journey's end." Surely the "deep roads and bad weather," since they caused the difficulty and fatigue," are to be given a place of emphasis in the sentence, and also come most naturally before mention of what they caused. Therefore they come at or near the beginning of the sentence. Then the end of the sentence is reserved for the most important fact: "we came to our journey's end."

Yet it is probably possible to make further improvement in this specimen sentence by placing "at last" out of its natural order, at the beginning of the sentence: "At last, through deep roads and bad weather, with no small difficulty and after much fatigue, we came to our journey's end." In this version "at last" receives due emphasis. Likewise the sentence is bound together more closely because the two ends are made dependent upon each other. The order of parts employed might be called the strong-weaker-strongest order, and is a modified order of climax. It applies particularly to sentences of some length and complexity, but is not, of course, a pattern to be followed even in all long sentences. As already stated, it cannot be employed in violation of grammatical rules, and

sometimes the logical relationship of ideas makes its use impracticable. Likewise the relationship of ideas expressed in successive sentences frequently makes desirable a different order, as when an idea is expressed at the beginning of a given sentence so that it will be close to something in the previous sentence. It may be that the idea in question is of greatest importance in its sentence.

But in spite of all the compromises that it must make, the strong-weaker-strongest order, the order of modified climax, is generally the most effective sentence pattern. To call it the natural pattern, which it is, does not mean that everybody will employ it without taking thought to do so, but simply that since the beginning and the end of a sentence, as of almost anything, attract and receive most attention, we tend to build our sentences with that unconsciously in mind. As an example take the following passage picked from a newspaper. It lacks certain graces, but the writer makes his point clear.

"That is the trouble, but not the root of the trouble; that lies far deeper. The roots of bad government lie right down deep in society. The people themselves are just as much to blame as the politicians, if not more so. When a man is running for Congress we do not ask him whether he will work for the whole nation; we want to know what he will do for our particular locality. That is the standard by which we judge him. His job depends not on what he does for the nation but on what he does for the people in his particular locality."

Examination will show that the writer of the foregoing followed the strong-weaker-strongest pattern quite consistently. Let us now take an example at random from an anthology of essays, from an essay called "The Mowing of a Field," and written by Hiltaire Belloc.<sup>1</sup>

"When I came to my own gate and my own field, and had before me the house I knew, I looked round a little (though it was already evening), and I saw that the grass was standing as it should stand when it is ready for the scythe. For in this, as in everything that a man can do—of those things at least which are very old—there is an exact moment when they are done best. And it has been remarked of whatever rules us that it works blunderingly, seeing that the good things given to a man are not given at the precise moment when they would have filled him with delight. But, whether this be true or false, we can choose the just turn of the seasons in everything we do of our own will, and especially in the making of hay. . . ."

Once more it is easy to note the tendency of each sentence to move towards an idea of greatest importance. And we find it again in the following paragraphs from "A Word for Autumn," by A. A. Milne, which are taken from the anthology mentioned above:

"Last night the waiter put the celery on with the cheese, and I knew that summer was indeed dead. Other signs

<sup>1</sup> The three quotations used here are from "Modern Essays," selected by Christopher Morley, and published by Harcourt, Brace and Company.

of autumn there may be—the reddening leaf, the chill in the early-morning air, the misty evenings—but none of these comes home to me so truly. There may be cool mornings in July; in a year of drought the leaves may change before their time; it is only with the first celery that summer is over.

“I knew all along that it would not last. Even in April I was saying that winter would soon be here. Yet somehow it had begun to seem possible lately that a miracle might happen, that summer might drift on and on through the months—a final upheaval to crown a wonderful year. The celery settled that. Last night with the celery autumn came into its own.”

Here is another random case, from an essay on “American Literature,” by John Macy:

“An example of what seems to be the American habit of writing about everything except American life, is the work of General Lew Wallace. Wallace was one of the important secondary generals in the Civil War, distinguished at Fort Donelson and at Shiloh. After the war he wrote ‘Ben-Hur,’ a doubly abominable book, because it is not badly written and it shows a lively imagination. There is nothing in it so valuable, so dramatically significant as a week in Wallace’s war experiences. ‘Ben-Hur,’ fit work for a country clergyman with a pretty literary gift, is a ridiculous inanity to come from a man who has seen the things that Wallace saw; it is understandable that the man of experience may not write at all, and, on the other hand, that the man of secluded life may have the imagination to make a military epic. But for a man crammed with experience of the most dramatic sort and



discovering the ability and the ambition to write—for him to make spurious oriental romances which achieve an enormous popularity! The case is too grotesque to be typical, yet it is exceptional in degree rather in kind. The American literary artist has written about everything under the skies except what matters most in his own life. General Grant's plain autobiography, not art and of course not attempting to be, is better literature than most of our books in artistic forms, because of its intellectual integrity and the profound importance of the subject-matter."

The preceding examples should make clear how the strong-weaker-strongest order may be employed. They do not, however, and should not, justify the conclusion that no other arrangement of a sentence is good.

When it comes to the writing of paragraphs, the strong-weaker-strongest order is again the most generally effective. Then its use is a matter of arranging sentences or groups of sentences so that at the beginning of the paragraph, where the reader expects it, he will be interested and made curious, and at the end of the paragraph he will find something of greatest interest to satisfy his curiosity. The interest aroused by the opening sentences helps to carry the reader thru sentences of lesser appeal, until he is again caught up by the stronger sentences near the end, and raised to the climax.

What has just been said of parts of sentences within sentences, and of sentences within paragraphs, is likewise true of paragraphs or chapters within longer writings. When a writer has something to say that re-

quires several or many paragraphs, he must work toward a full statement of his central idea. Of course he may begin with a topic statement; but if the idea needs to be written about, this initial statement will not transmit all of the meaning intended. So the writer must break up his central idea into its parts and set forth the parts in such a manner that the significance of the idea grows greater for a reader as he goes along. It is in the disposition of parts that the strong-weaker-strongest order is to be followed, when the logic of the case leaves opportunity for different orders. But even the logical order, if there be only one order allowed by logic, will be one of increasing significance; for since the successive parts will become understandable only after those preceding, there will be a gradual piling up of meaning to the end. In most cases, however, logic will not demand a certain order, but will leave opportunity for different arrangements of the parts; that is, the writing will be understandable with the parts in any one of several orders. Then the strong-weaker-strongest order will probably be most effective; and the paragraphs that treat the different divisions of the central idea will be best arranged in that order.

It must be noted that in many writings the several divisions are of approximately equal significance and are understandable in any, or almost any, order. Then neither our modified principle of climax nor the rule of logic can determine the order. But here again the result of using any order will be a growth of signifi-

cance as the successive divisions are treated; for each division will add, to its own intrinsic value, some value from all those that go before it. Thus it appears that any properly constructed writing will follow either the order of climax or the modified order of climax.

Let us take the following short essay as a working example. In the form first given its parts are ordered in violation of the principle of modified climax; and while the meaning is clear enough, the essay surely lacks force. In the second version the principle is more closely followed.

#### THE BLESSED AMATEUR

Blessed is the amateur; yes, thrice blessed is he. He is, first, a free man, since he has no definite standard that he must attain in order to keep his job. In fact, he has no job to keep while he is being an amateur. Nobody can say to him, "You must do thus and so." He sets his own goal in the matter of accomplishment.

Second, he is a contented man, because the goal he sets is simply his best. This is the only satisfactory goal possible; for a man can attain it daily, yet always set it higher for the next day. Therefore the amateur is satisfied with today's accomplishment, and yet looks forward with pleasure towards tomorrow's effort. His goal is not what the best amateur in his field has done; that need not concern him. It is not what professionals in his field are expected to accomplish. Nor is it the average of either professional or amateur accomplishment. The curse of the standardizing efficiency expert is not upon the amateur.

Third, the amateur is a rich man. The way to get

greatly is to give freely; and the amateur's work means giving, not getting, of time and money and energy. Thus the amateur escapes the temptation to avarice and things worse, and thus he gains the wealth of blessedness. He does not work for hire. Every stroke of his brush or his pen or his golf club, every new idea of his, is an outward gesture made for its own sake, not for material gain.

### THE BLESSED AMATEUR

Blessed is the amateur; yes, thrice blessed is he. He has no definite standard to which he must attain if he would keep his job. In fact, while he is being an amateur, he has no job to keep. Therefore nobody can say to him, "You must do thus and so." In the matter of accomplishment, he sets his own goal. He is, then, a free man—once blessed.

And what is the goal he sets for himself? It is not what the best amateur in his field has done; that need not concern him. It is not what professionals in his field are expected to accomplish. Nor is it the average of either professional or amateur attainment. The curse of the standardizing efficiency expert is not upon the amateur. No, his goal is simply his best. And it is the only satisfactory goal possible; for a man can attain it daily, yet always set it higher for the next day. Therefore the amateur is satisfied with today's accomplishment, and yet looks forward with pleasure towards tomorrow's effort. He is, then, a contented man—twice blessed.

The amateur does not work for hire. His work means giving, not getting, of time and money and energy. Every stroke of his brush or his pen or his golf club,

every new idea of his, is an outward gesture made for its own sake, not for material gain. Thus the amateur escapes the temptation to avarice and things worse, and thus he gains wealth of blessedness; for the way to get greatly is to give freely. So the amateur is a rich man—thrice blessed.

*Connectives.*—A forceful writer is nearly always skilful in the use of connectives. True, he phrases his thoughts so that he requires as few connectives as possible; but he does not leave out those that are necessary, and he is careful to place them properly. And, but, so, therefore, since, as, because, for, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also, then, etc.,—such words he makes signposts to guide the reader along the course of his thought, forwards and backwards and around turns. The student cannot too carefully study the sentences of good writers to see how they use connective words or groups of words, and how they avoid the excessive use of connectives. It will be effort well repaid to go through a dozen or more pages from different writers, making a study of connectives and noting how they practically outline the writing. Even the indifferent student will profit from such investigation.

*Repetition.*—Perhaps oftener than not, frequent or close repetition of a sound, a word, a group of words, or an idea, is to be avoided. Nevertheless, the clever writer gains force by deliberately employing repetition, and the wise writer never avoids repetition by using an approximation. Repetition, then, is good when ac-

curacy demands it, and also when it serves to emphasize an idea or a certain feeling.

*Variety.*—"Avoid unnecessary and unpleasant repetition," is a negative principle which must be immediately followed by the positive: "Strive for variety in statement." In connectives, in adjectives, nouns, verbs and adverbs, in sentence structure and length of sentences, and in sound, the forceful writer constantly offers something different. How can he do it?—Mainly it is a matter of moving forward in thought, of constantly turning up fresh ideas; for each successive idea will call for its own expression. Therefore the writer who will think hard and express his ideas as adequately as he can, will do what is mainly essential to securing variety. But even such a writer will have to go over his work in order to get rid of the awkward repetition that creeps in because ideas must be carried along from sentence to sentence, and to weed out other infelicities. Writing should be done with full steam up, and as spontaneously as may be; but revision is nevertheless a necessity.



## CHAPTER VII

### STYLE

Perhaps it is best not to attempt a definition of style. There are plenty of definitions to be had for the seeking, and most of them are good; but none of them will aid much here. It is interesting, but not very helpful, to know that "The style is the man," and that "Every man has his own style, like his own nose." If this is the case, let each man read, observe and write, and develop his own way of saying things. That will be his style.

If a man would put himself into his writings, he must first *feel* what he is writing about. This does not mean that he must always write under the stress of strong emotion, but that he must react truly to his subject-matter, must take a personal interest in it. One cannot write in sorrow, in anger, in indignation, in fear, in joy, from indifference, or from serious desire to treat his subject properly, without leaving the mark of his mood upon his work. Our feelings largely determine our manner of expression; a man's style is partly a matter of how he feels about things. If he shows a proper feeling, we approve his style in so far as it is a matter of feeling.

It is extremely important that a writer's feeling shall be right in kind and just adequate in strength. He must not show anger or hatred if indignation fits the case; he must not shed maudlin tears over a drowned kitten. In short, there must be proper emotion, but no "putting on." Likewise, it will not do to explain a practical process, to write an essay on social welfare work, or to tell a story for ordinary people, in the high-sounding language perhaps appropriate to writing that is intended as a show of erudition or aesthetic taste, or both. Plain business must be done in plain words; most writing is best done in the more familiar terms. They have vigor and beauty enough for the master hand, and the rest of us must use them, however imperfectly.

A good style, then, comes partly from knowing how words have been used by good writers. Only studious reading will give this knowledge, this feeling for the right word. The writer who has it can achieve propriety, which comes from knowing what words and what feelings, what words and what meanings, go together. The more thoro a man's knowledge of words and their associations, the better his style is likely to be.

It is also true that a good style depends upon a thoro knowledge of the meanings and emotions expressed in sentence structure. A "rhetorical question," for example, is not a question, but is used to make emphatic what might be a declarative statement. We invert sentences, use the exclamatory or the im-

perative form, and make many other departures from the ordinary declarative and interrogative forms, because feeling dictates. He who has a good style is sensitive to these departures, and makes them naturally.

There is another side to the matter of style—the music of a writer's words. Has he an ear for the pleasing cadences, the harmonious combinations, of speech sounds? Can he write what is easily pronounced? Can he sense the subtle connections, not merely between sound and sense, but also between sound and feeling? If he is an apt student of the music of words, his sentences will play skillfully upon the emotions of his readers and rouse in them what he himself feels. To begin with, he must be naturally somewhat sensitive to sound values; but mainly, he must be constantly alert to the speech he hears and the writing he reads, be constantly listening for new notes and chords. Then, like any other musician, he must practice.

From what has been said, it appears that style is largely a matter of feeling. First, the writer must neither curb his own feelings too much nor give them too free a rein. Second, he must study the writing of others, and learn what words and constructions they use to express the various kinds and degrees of feeling. Third, he must learn the emotional values of speech sounds, and the speech-tunes that commonly express sorrow, joy, anger, etc. Surely all this is essential if one would acquire a good style.

It is likewise essential that one heed the usages of grammar, the rules for punctuation, and the principles of rhetoric—that is, in the main. But he must not let these stand in the way of his inventive faculties when the latter present something ingenious, something new and attractive. One mark of the good stylist is the liberty he takes for the sake of invention. The creative imagination is a heavy contributor to style; when a writer really expresses himself, he is creating. Either the ideas or the form, or both, seem fresh and novel to him. His mind is making new combinations, and they cannot be other than peculiar to him; they must be expressed in *his* style. No matter how hard or how long he must work to get his ideas, when they come they flash upon him like discoveries, and he may not be able to account for them fully. While one is writing or speaking in this way, he senses a freedom not to be gained otherwise. It might be said that style is free expression, though not of necessity easy expression.

In the light of what has been said, how shall one develop his style? First of all he must acquire a good vocabulary and a working knowledge of grammar and of punctuation. Then he must read widely, yet read intensively the authors that particularly attract him. This he must do in order to find out how others write, but not in order to imitate any single writer. Rather, he should try to discover the good traits in the styles of various authors; he should examine the sentence structure of writers who put things clearly and forcefully;

he should linger over well-chosen words and happy expressions, and try to find out why they are good writing. From such study he will acquire invaluable knowledge that nobody can give him.

Finally, and most important, the writer who is developing his style should write frequently and regularly, striving always to say things in the way that his knowledge of writing tells him is best. Eventually, after much practice, he will find a way of saying things so that they almost suit him. Then he will have a style of his own, yet a composite of many styles, for we must write both for others and like others. Only in the combination of traits, not in the traits, is a man's style unique.

Perhaps a fitting conclusion to a discussion of style that aims at being practical rather than profound, is Swift's famous definition: "Style is proper words in proper places." It is a statement into which can be packed all that has been said here on style—and much more.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MOODS OF WRITING

#### *The Intellectual Mood*

There are, roughly speaking, six greater moods or states of mind to which writing rouses us. The first might be called the mood of intellectual interest. It is marked by curiosity for further information, scientific, ethical, aesthetic, metaphysical or practical, and by the pleasure that comes from the satisfying of such curiosity. Textbooks, treatises, many business letters, encyclopaedias, books on exploration or on scientific matters, essays on philosophy, and the greater number of writings in literary criticism, are examples of writing that stirs intellectual interest, that puts us into what we shall now call, for short, the intellectual mood. This does not mean that the writings just listed never induce any other mood, but that they appeal mainly to the intellect.

Whether or not writing rouses the intellectual mood predominately and for most readers, depends first upon the subject-matter. The subject-matter may be the sort of thing about which we think rather than feel, something that interests us and makes us curious with-



out moving our emotions strongly. If this is the case, and if the writer treats his subject from a desire merely to impart information, the resulting mood will be the intellectual. The writer will consider his readers and discover what they already know about his subject. This will bring clearly before him what he has new to tell them. When he has thus found out his "message," he can choose, from all that his readers know, what he will have to use to make his own contribution understandable; for he cannot present the new without joining it to the old and familiar. This joining is the business of his writing, in which he will be constantly going from the old to the new. He may, indeed, in order to rouse curiosity, begin with a brief statement of his "message," or with a hint as to the nature of it; but even in these cases he will make his own contribution understandable only by working to it thru what his readers already know.

In the second place, a writer may treat emotional material so that his appeal is to the intellect. He may, for example, take the scientific attitude toward subject-matter that would ordinarily be horrible or frightful or sad, and may be so coldly analytical that his readers adopt the same attitude. There is very little laughter in a book that analyzes the comic; when we dissect the jokes, we are not seeking for the fun in them, but for the causes of the fun. It is even possible for a novelist to treat his characters as so many zoölogical specimens under observation, and thus to put his readers into the intellectual mood, instead of

making them feel with the characters. Of course the result is rather doubtful fiction.

The intellectual mood, then, is induced either by subject-matter that naturally stirs only a desire for more information, or because the writer treats his subject-matter in a scientific, impersonal manner. It is the matter-of-fact mood, proper to the transaction of every-day business.

### *The Emotional Moods*

Certain writings throw us into moods that contrast with the intellectual because they are marked by feeling rather than by thought. It is not that no information is imparted, no curiosity roused, but that the information given, and the facts or deeds represented, are such as touch the reader emotionally. Now there are many emotions that may be stirred; but emotional moods may be roughly divided into five: the cheerful, the comic, the humorous, the pathetic, and the tragic. It will be necessary to take these moods in turn and to define them. But first let us understand that no writing of any great length is likely to rouse only one mood. The five work together, one affording relief from the other or serving to heighten its effect. Yet one may predominate, or the end of a story or an essay may leave us so definitely in a certain mood that we characterize the whole writing by the name of that mood.

Again, before we define the moods, we must under-

stand that most of the emotions roused are not so strong as they would be if readers were actually taking part in the thinking or acting represented by the writing, or really seeing the objects described, instead of imagining the whole process. The emotions are only incipiently stirred. (That is why we can read a tragedy. Also, there is much that is positively and actually enjoyable in understanding and appreciating the art, the form, the medium, of a tragedy; so that the real pleasure outweighs the imagined pain.) We are, then, in this chapter, thinking of the emotions as stirred by the imagination, indirectly. The effect of a piece of writing is not entirely a matter of mood, and we are considering only the effect that is due to mood.

*The Cheerful Mood.*—The cheerful mood is positively pleasant. Writing that is in the cheerful mood gives us familiar pleasant things just as we should expect them to be, altho perhaps in new combinations. In a cheerful essay the thought, no matter how new, is free and easy, because it is about familiar pleasant things. In a cheerful story things happen as we should like to have them happen; everything goes well, at least where the story is cheerful. Yet a story in which there was no trouble, no hint of disaster, would probably be insipid. Therefore it is wise to mix in some difficulty, or the possibility of it, and thus to heighten the effect of the pleasant stretches.

While we read for the thought in the intellectual mood, in the cheerful mood we read the thought for

the pleasant feelings stirred by it. But not all pleasant feelings belong properly to the cheerful mood. Some writing moves us to laughter; and so we get what is best called the comic mood.

*The Comic Mood.*—Writing in the cheerful mood may please us greatly; but it does not make us laugh, unless it be from mere excess of animal spirits, which must indeed come rarely because of what one reads. Writings in the comic mood make us laugh, or tend to do so; and they make us laugh because what they present to us is different in kind from what merely cheerful writing presents.

In the first place, comic writing gives us the naïve, the innocent, the childish, either in children or in adults. It gives us also nonsense; allows our minds escape from purposeful, directed thinking to such thinking as children do. It gives us parody and burlesque, absurd imitation and exaggeration such as children practice naturally. It gives us double meaning, a sort of puzzle in which children take delight. And it gives us persons in difficult but not too serious situations, into which they have perhaps blundered because of some childish lack, or with which they cannot cope. Such things are the subject-matter of comic writing. We cannot here go deeper into their nature to show just how they give us pleasure, or how even satiric comedy moves us to or towards the childish, the natural, the primitive, in thinking and in feeling. It must suffice to say that we are moved towards natural, primitive

feeling, from ordinary states of mind, and moved by forms that are derived from the ingenuous, naïve thinking and feeling and acting of children. Even the primitive pleasure of cruelty sometimes contributes to the effect of the comic.

The student may wonder why there is no place made here for a witty mood. The reason is that laughable wit affords us the same pleasures given by the comic forms; for such wit is simply spontaneous, senseful use of the comic forms when the ordinary, straightforward forms are expected or proper. The witty person, for example, spontaneously talks nonsense that means what he dares not say directly; and because of the pleasure his nonsense gives, as well as because he has not actually said the forbidden, we laugh and let it go at that. Laughable wit, then, is a manner of using the comic, and induces the comic mood.

*The Humorous Mood.*—It may seem strange at first to set the humorous mood apart from the comic, but they should really be thought of as quite different. The pleasure of the comic comes thru relief from ordinary states of mind, such relief as we enjoy when we turn from work to play. The relief of the humorous is relief from the stronger emotions, from states of mind marked by strain or distress, or by actual pain. The sense of humor is essentially a denial of strong emotion, a denial made frequently by using the comic forms, sometimes by mere contradiction of the painful truth, sometimes even by profanity.

When a writer would put us into the humorous mood, he must first stir some emotion such as sorrow, anxiety, fear, hatred, affection, reverence or horror. Then he must use material that will break the emotional state in favor of a laugh, altho humor need not bring even a smile in order to be felt as humor. Naturally the forms of the comic are ready-made material for the writer who wishes to divert us from strong feeling, for they are positively laughable. Therefore they are most frequently employed to secure humorous effects. We turn easily from the stress of emotion to their playful freedom, and perhaps smile or laugh, according to the relief given. For example, the humorous author leads us into sympathy with a suffering character, and then makes the character say some droll thing about his suffering, or makes him do something naïve. If the comic stroke is successful we are moved from painful feeling to smiles or laughter. Again, the author may create a situation that stirs awe, or reverence, or sorrow, and then unexpectedly set off a comic fire-cracker. If there is the least excuse for it, we turn instantly to enjoy the laughable explosion.

It would be possible to make out formulae by which one could manufacture the comic and the humorous. For the comic the formula would consist, first, of a list of ordinary states of mind and what would cause them; second, of the several kinds of comic subject-matter with which the mind might be diverted. For humor the formula would consist, first, of the emotional states and what would cause them; second, of



the comic forms and anything else that would give us sharp relief from emotional stress. But helpful as it may be to know that such formulae could be made, the formulae themselves would be of little value to the writer. It is better for him to remember that nearly everything has its comic aspect, and that we can be made to feel about almost anything. Then if he has a keen sense for the fitness of things, he will have little difficulty in discovering the comic all about him; and if he knows how to relieve his own emotions by turning to the usual or to the comic, that is, if he has a sense of humor, it will be easy for him to make humor out of any emotional material that comes his way. But giving him the formulae would never give him either a sense for the fitness of things or a sense of humor.

A final word about the humorous mood: it is a mixed mood, in which the emotion of laughter and one of the other emotions listed above strive for supremacy, and laughter gets the upper hand. Sometimes the balance is very finely drawn, and we may not be able even to smile. Sometimes the emotion is nearly ousted, and we get a good laugh. But always the mood is one of mixed feelings, whereas in the comic mood laughter has only to contend with the strain of ordinary serious thinking.

*The Pathetic Mood.*—Another mixed mood is the pathetic, in which the emotions of laughter and pity strive for supremacy, and laughter loses. "It would have been funny if it hadn't been so pitiable," is a re-

mark often heard, and it exactly indicates the nature of pathos. Another proof that pathos is a mixture of the comic and the pitiable, is the fact that so much pathos has to do with children, who are naïve, ingenuous, innocent, and whose thinking and acting are the source of the comic forms. Children in trouble are quite likely to do things that would be funny if they were not so pitiable. Moreover, even in adults the pathetic usually has a strain of the naïve, altho the comic element may come from some excusable lack or lapse which is laughable because of its similarity to the naïve, because we should be able to take care of ourselves.

*The Tragic Mood.*—Last of the greater moods of writing is the tragic, which is the mood of unmixed sorrow, or of sorrow accompanied by pity or fear, or by both. In almost any tragedy there is some comic relief; but where we are expected to feel the tragic, great care is taken to exclude anything that might excite laughter. Otherwise the effect might be pathos, or mere bathos. Perhaps nothing is more comic than mock tragedy.

The essential difference between the pathetic and the tragic lies in this: the pathetic person is somehow excusably weak, therefore somewhat laughable tho more to be pitied. The tragic person is strong, noble, brave, yet meets with disaster. There is no need to excuse such a person. Also the fact that such a person meets with disaster, frequently death, explains

why fear so often accompanies the sorrow and pity of the tragic. We are brought face to face with sinister forces greater than we can conquer.

Before leaving the tragic let us repeat that most emotion roused by literary writings is stirred at second-hand. Because of this fact, and because of the pleasure contributed by the form, the thought, the characters, etc., tragedy is bearable. It is noteworthy that readers who cannot appreciate these things, but read only "for the story," do not like, and seldom read, stories with "sad endings."

*Other Emotional Moods.*—It would be possible to extend the list of emotional moods by adding the fearful, the horrible, the nauseating, the awful, etc.; for these feelings may be stirred alone. But they are really the lesser moods of literature, since they are usually subordinate to the other emotions here treated, or else used mainly to create feeling that may be turned to humorous account. Their subordinate position is shown by the fact that some of them have ordinarily been confused with the tragic. We do have, however, the "horror story," of which the mood is easily recognizable.

Finally, let us turn to the emotions directly stirred by writing when it is felt as actual experience. There must be some first-hand emotional reaction, however slight, to any piece of writing we pick up, not merely the emotion it should rouse in all of its readers, but also the feeling stirred in any given reader because of

his particular relationship to the writing. This individual feeling the literary artist may usually neglect; but to the writer of letters, etc., it is of the utmost importance. There is probably no writing more effective than really good personal letters; for they are not literature, but life, to the writer and to the reader. Yet it is perhaps enough to recognize the fact that such writings rouse actual emotion, for nobody needs or wants to be told what to say in a personal letter, or how to say it. We need only to keep the other person in mind and write as we would talk to him if we could use the same time and pains in talking that we can use in writing. As a matter of fact, that is a pretty good rule to follow in all writing.

## APPENDIX

In a course in rhetoric it is desirable, but not always easy, to make theme writing an essentially practical matter, rather than merely a means of training. In the accomplishment of this purpose the following suggestions for assignments may be found helpful.

In the first place, nearly all high schools and colleges publish papers of one kind or another written partly or wholly by students. This gives the student of rhetoric an opportunity to write stories, editorials, essays, verse, and news items with a view to possible publication. He can thus write for his fellow students about things in which they are interested, and may perhaps see his work in print. When this plan is adopted, the teacher should doubtless decide what themes are to be submitted to editors.

If the class is composed of somewhat advanced students, there is no good reason why they should not be encouraged to write with the needs of certain metropolitan dailies or national magazines in mind. It is probable, of course, that only a few will produce material worth sending to editors; but all will have definite goals to strive for, definite standards to meet, and will feel the spur of creative effort. This is perhaps the next best training to independent production for the literary market. In any case it is certainly true, as Robert Frost says, that one should always write with the feeling that he is producing actual literature. The ideal is writing for possible pub-

lication; next to the ideal is pretending to write for publication.

But not all of the themes assigned in the ordinary rhetoric course can well be written for publication, or even for pretended publication; for some of the tasks that students should perform are more or less disconnected and hence do not lend themselves to this purpose. Nevertheless, even these tasks can be made quite real.

When the class is practicing the writing of word-pictures, character sketches, and stories, each student may be required to use as his subject-matter persons, places, and happenings drawn from a chosen community with which he is familiar. Of course it will be necessary for him to alter and supplement his material thru his imagination, but the substance of his writing will be based on his actual observation. Thus he will not only be writing a first-hand record of things with which he is familiar, but he will be treating familiar things precisely as the literary artist treats his experience. The teacher will find no difficulty in assigning representative tasks that will put the student thru his paces and at the same time allow him to produce a series of themes at least worth keeping. Moreover, as the student draws more and more upon the resources of his chosen community, his interest will increase and his writing will improve accordingly.

The word "community," as used above, must be broadly understood. It might mean: the home town, a section of a city, a rural neighborhood, the persons or places connected with a school or large business establishment, any sort of life taken as a whole, such as railroad life, ranch life, political life, business life in a city or a town, and so forth. The chief considerations are whether the community offers good and sufficient material, and whether



the student really knows about it or can at least find out about it.

A still better opportunity to make themes real is offered in connection with essay writing. Then each student may be required to choose a subject in which he is interested, and to follow it thruout the course, reading steadily and making regular reports. Supposing that one theme is written each week, then every second theme might deal with the student's chosen subject in the form of a report embodying the result of the reading done in the preceding two weeks. It is well, also, to have these reports written in class, from notes if necessary, and under the pressure that the time limit imposes: for this will be found to develop a readiness of thought and expression otherwise difficult to achieve. At the end of the course there should be a master theme covering all of the work done for the several reports; and this theme should be carefully prepared at home, so that it may be both concise and complete, a thoroly worth-while record of independent work.

In the choice of subjects the student may be allowed a considerable amount of freedom. The teacher should probably prepare a list of suggestions, which might include the names of authors, and groups of authors, whose lives and works might be studied, and a list of other subjects, such as advertising, automobiles, gasoline motors, agriculture, banking, the essay, the short story, autobiography, introductory books on law or medicine or a science—anything in which the student is really interested and from which, with the guidance of his teacher, he may derive valuable information. In many cases it will even be possible for the student to do original work of investigation in preparing for one or two themes. Suppose, for example, he should choose advertising as

his subject. He could easily analyze the advertising contents of a certain magazine, and then write an essay based upon his analysis. Again, if his subject related to social service work, he could accompany or interview some social worker in order to obtain material.

Under this plan each student will be working for himself, writing for himself. There will be no make-believe work; his writing will serve the very real purpose of recording the results of work done because he chooses to do it. He will have something to say that he wants to say, real and personal beliefs to defend; and he will develop a desire to write effectively. Then matters of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and rhetoric will have real significance to him, and he will grow rapidly in ability to write. He will, finally, be happy in his work.



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